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JOHN CARTER OF MARS®

2D20™

DOTAR SOJAT™ ERA
SUPPLEMENTAL RULEBOOK

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JOHN CARTER OF MARS®

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My first recollection of Captain Carter is of the few months he spent at my father's home in Virginia, just prior to the opening of the civil war. I was then a child of but five years, yet I well remember the tall, dark, smooth-faced, athletic man whom I called Uncle Jack.

He seemed always to be laughing; and he entered into the sports of the children with the same hearty good fellowship he displayed toward those pastimes in which the men and women of his own age indulged; or he would sit for an hour at a time entertaining my old grandmother with stories of his strange, wild life in all parts of the world. We all loved him, and our slaves fairly worshipped the ground he trod.

He was a splendid specimen of manhood, standing a good two inches over six feet, broad of shoulder and narrow of hip, with the carriage of the trained fighting man. His features were regular and clear cut, his hair black and closely cropped, while his eyes were of a steel gray, reflecting a strong and loyal character, filled with fire and initiative. His manners were perfect, and his courtliness was that of a typical southern gentleman of the highest type.

His horsemanship, especially after hounds, was a marvel and delight even in that country of magnificent horsemen. I have often heard my father caution him against his wild recklessness, but he would only laugh, and say that the tumble that killed him would be from the back of a horse yet unfoaled.

When the war broke out he left us, nor did I see him again for some fifteen or sixteen years. When he returned it was without warning, and I was much surprised to note that he had not aged apparently a moment, nor had he changed in any other outward way. He was, when others were with him, the same genial, happy fellow we had known of old, but when he thought himself alone I have seen him sit for hours gazing off into space, his face set in a look of wistful longing and hopeless misery; and at night he would sit thus looking up into the heavens, at what I did not know until I read his manuscript years afterward.

He told us that he had been prospecting and mining in Arizona part of the time since the war; and that he had been very successful was evidenced by the unlimited amount of money with which he was supplied. As to the details of his life during these years he was very reticent, in fact he would not talk of them at all.

—The Narrator, *A Princess of Mars*

I opened my eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness. I was not asleep, no need for pinching here; my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact; neither did I.

— John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

AN ERA OF DISCOVERY

> *I opened my eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness. I was not asleep, no need for pinching here; my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact; neither did I.*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

Welcome to the first supplement devoted to the three eras of play in ***John Carter of Mars***. This book covers the Dotar Sojat era, that time shortly before and during John Carter's first adventures on Mars. During this time, many of Barsoom's nations are hostile to each other, with wars and skirmishes being commonplace. Misunderstandings and ignorance of other cultures is higher than it is in other times, leading to more conflicts and violence. During this era, Carter himself is mostly a captive of the Tharks or some other group, and most of his adventures revolve around learning the basics of survival and life on the planet. Eventually he falls in love, ends the war between Helium and its neighbor, Zodanga, and helps the Thark horde evolve into something better led and more inclined to friendship and alliance — but that is only toward the end. For much of this time, Barsoom is a rough place full of equal parts wonder and unknown perils.

The First Era

While hardly the first period of conflict and adventure on the world of Barsoom, this is the first era of play covered by ***John Carter of Mars***. It is the time when Carter himself is the least famous and impactful, making it a great period for other characters to carve out their own legends and accomplishments. However, as Carter eventually literally saves the planet from suffocation and death, this time period also carries the challenge of being somewhat overshadowed by the great days to come. Further, many corners of the planet first unseen and unknown will become revealed.

Advice in this book will help mitigate and deal with these problems to some extent, but narrators and players should also remember that as the first era, it is both the most important and least defined. This is the "Wild West" period of Barsoom, where bold action can lead to great success or ignoble ends. It is no mistake Carter himself travels from the American frontier of his day to the wilds of Barsoom to begin his adventures in this era — he trades one land of struggle, exploration, and violence for another.

Themes in this Book

This whole book offers new rules, characters, narrator advice, and other useful information all focused on the same core themes that dominate the era: discovery, exploration, forging new alliances, and the ever-present adventure and conflict that dominates the Barsoom stories of every era.

New culture- and species-based options focus on the three dominant races in the era's core tale, *A Princess of Mars*. These are the red Martians, green Martians, and, of course, the Earthborn. Other era books will expand the options for other cultures and groups.

Discovery and alliance building is key to this era. When we first encounter Barsoom, there are almost no noteworthy alliances; the Tharks in particular don't even accept the concept of friendship or kind treatment for pets, livestock, or subordinates; and much of the history and science of the planet is alien to most of its inhabitants. Even though this is the shortest of the eras of play, this time period is when all that begins to change. Carter himself has a lot to do with that, but he is not alone in his efforts. Dejah Thoris and the people of Helium in particular try to find peace, make allies, and continue to understand and explore their world. Tars Tarkas finds himself open to new concepts and ideas, especially once he is shown their worth. The heroes of the era may engage in thrilling battles and great romance, but they also explore and learn.

New Rules and the Existing Game

The rules presented in this book are supplementary and optional. They are not intended to render the rules in the core rulebook and other supplements obsolete or unusable. In some cases they do alter some small part of a larger rules section from the core book, usually due to greatly expanding a smaller simpler system for handling the same concepts.

With new talents, accolades, and similar features, the same guidelines and rules for building and designing them were used here as elsewhere, making them fully compatible with existing material. In the case of optional rules, the systems presented are just that, optional. They are presented as neither superior to those in the core rulebook nor necessary for play: they are more detailed and robust tools for groups who desire additional mechanical focus in certain areas.

Finally, while these elements build on existing rules and use similar design principles as other rules in the game, optional and otherwise, they are independent of them. For example, while the rules for airships and airship combat share common design principles with the rules for large-scale conflicts presented in the ***Narrator's Kit and Screen***, you are not required to have or know those rules to use and enjoy the airship rules in this book.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

CHAPTER 1: TALES OF THE ERA

This chapter details the general background and history of the era, as well as placing the period within the overall history of Barsoom. It also provides a brief summary and narrator's analysis of the first book of the Barsoom stories, *A Princess of Mars*.

CHAPTER 2: PEOPLES OF THE ERA

Focusing on red Martians, green Martians, and Earthborn, this chapter provides a character's-eye look at the era. It also provides several new talents, accolades, and flaws for use by characters of these types. It also includes new talents focusing on the themes of the era and the rules presented in this book.

CHAPTER 3: CHAMPIONS OF THE ERA

Expanding on the core book, this chapter provides additional important narrator characters from this era. It also provides updates and alterations for existing characters to tailor them to this era.

CHAPTER 4: MYSTERIES OF BARSOOM

This chapter provides more mysterious locations, strange phenomena, and bizarre powers to be include in adventures and campaigns. Some of these concepts are taken from the Barsoom tales, while others are new additions inspired from other sources, including other pulp adventure stories.

CHAPTER 5: NARRATING THE ERA

With a focus on the themes and events of the era, this chapter expands and refines the narrator advice in the core book to better assist in running games and campaigns set during this time. Tables for random events are also provided.

CHAPTER 6: AIRSHIPS OF MARS

This chapter is focused on the most important of vehicles, the Martian flier or airship. Rules for running ship action and conflict, designing ships, and several examples of airships are provided. Also included are rules for customizing airships to represent certain cultural and national strengths and tendencies, as well some speculative craft that may one day fly in the skies over Mars.

CHAPTER 7: ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEEDS

Adding to the existing renown system, this chapter introduces narrators and players to two new forms of renown rewards: achievements and deeds. Used to celebrate great acts and affect lasting change, these new rules are compatible with the existing renown rules.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS AND IS NOT

As part of a three-book series focusing on only one era of play, this book is not a general supplement for every possible player option or concept that could expand the setting and rules of ***John Carter of Mars***. The focus here is on certain themes, cultures, and ideas described in this introduction. In the later era books, players and narrators will be introduced to similar new concepts and rules for later eras. All these books are designed to work together but also stand as singular supplements. Thus you do not need to possess the Prince of Helium or Jeddak of Jeddaks era books to use and enjoy this book, but if you do you will find many of the options and ideas in those later era books may also be used in Dotar Sojat era play.

We hope you enjoy this book, the first of three deeper dives into the eras of play in ***John Carter***. Now, without further delay, let's travel to the early days of John Carter's time on Barsoom.

WHAT YOU NEED TO USE THIS BOOK

Other than a copy of the ***John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom*** core rulebook, no additional tools or supplies are needed to use and enjoy this book. However, there are a few things narrators and players may wish to consider acquiring anyway.

If the airship rules in this book see heavy and frequent use in a group's games, the players may wish to devote some space at their gaming table for a "skymap" to represent an area of Martian sky and some markers or miniatures to represent airships. This can be as simple as using a large sheet of paper and some coins or other knick-knacks for each ship, or it can be a complex affair with painted miniatures and crafted terrain or using our ***John Carter of Mars: Airships of Barsoom Tile Set***. As long as what is used helps visually to direct airship action and conflict during play? It's all good.

If achievements and deeds from this book are used during play, narrators and players may wish to have additional paper, a character journal such as the ***John Carter of Mars Prince of Helium Notebook***, or some other methods of recording a more detailed account of character actions and accomplishments. Since deeds in particular can be "cashed in" for other accolades later but may still be referenced and appreciated, it is useful to have notes of these new renown awards. It can also be quite enjoyable, creating a history and accounting of each character's great accomplishments.

Other than that, no new tools, dice, or other supplies are needed to use this book. And even the above are only suggestions. In most cases all that is needed to use this sourcebook in a campaign is the time to read and understand it.

TALES OF THE ERA

> *"As you know I am not of Barsoom; your ways are not my ways, and I can only act in the future as I have in the past, in accordance with the dictates of my conscience and guided by the standards of mine own people."*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

As the first of the eras covered in ***John Carter of Mars***, the Dotar Sojat period is in many ways the most significant. Prior to the arrival of John Carter on Barsoom, the planet's various cultures and kingdoms were largely insular and ill-informed about the realities of life elsewhere on the Red Planet. Though this status quo remains true for the majority of Barsoom during this era, it begins to change significantly and quickly for Helium, Thark, and their immediate neighbors.

In Times Before

Millennia of Barsoomian history exists before the beginning of this era, much of it suitable for setting various adventures and campaigns. The details of ancient Barsoom are largely unknown, even to its modern inhabitants.

In the Beginning

It is nearly universally accepted that all humanoid life on Barsoom began with a single tree. The exact details may vary between individual scholars or cultures, but the core concept remains. This Tree of Life existed at the center of the Valley Dor and from it came the white apes, six-legged Martian worms, plant men, and the first Barsoomians, the First Born. The tree spawned these creations three million years before John Carter arrived on Barsoom, and over the eons the "fruit" of the tree evolved into the people and beasts that now populate the world. Every living thing that walks, flies, or crawls on Barsoom traces its lineage back to some combination of those early creatures.

The process of Barsoom transforming into the land readers of the Barsoom novels are familiar with is long, covering millennia. It is never explicitly stated by Burroughs, but it's very likely that various creatures, races, and cultures surfaced and went extinct during this time. Descendants of these creatures or peoples might even still survive in some diminished form in a distant corner of the world.

The earliest days of Barsoom could make for exciting campaigns, allowing narrators great leeway because nearly nothing is known of those times. However, the near complete lack of information also means narrators must determine nearly everything about the setting themselves, and character options are severely limited, especially in the days when only the First Born Martians dwelled on the planet.

Untold History

Barsoomian prehistory is a fertile ground for narrator imagination. Over the three million years between life as Barsoom knows it rising and the time of the Barsoom novels, countless beasts, wonders, and strange civilizations no doubt existed. There are near endless possibilities.

The novels sometimes hint at such things, often presenting a ruin or wonder from some long-lost people. Narrators should feel free to create their own beasts, secrets, and civilizations from Barsoom's distant past. It is even possible that creatures or cultures from other worlds somehow found their way to Barsoom during that time or that ancient civilizations left Barsoom for the stars. These beings may one day return, becoming new allies or threats for the heroes during a campaign.

The Early Kingdoms

It is known that the old kingdoms of Barsoom ruled a land of lush green and sapphire seas, a stark contrast to the dying world of modern Mars. These nations were largely made up of Okar and white Martian cultures, with the First Born having retreated to isolation to guide Barsoom from the shadows. The green men emerged, mostly treated as outsiders or slaves by the other races.

Approximately a million years ago, the white-skinned Orovars ruled much of the thriving and lush coastal regions of Barsoom. The Okar, smaller in number and less prosperous, dared to explore and settled in the frozen north. The First Born began to retreat to their hidden bases and subterranean sea, though they held firm control of the belief structures of Barsoom and would continue to dominate this area until beyond the Dotar Sojat era.

Eventually, however, things began to change. The air thinned and the seas receded. The Orovars lost hold of the dying seas and their cities fell to ruin. The green Martians rose up and conquered the now-barren sea beds, taking over the lands where the Orovar once ruled. Meanwhile the Okar established themselves in sealed northern cities while the First Born continued their raiding and secret manipulation of Barsoom's culture with the help of their unwitting pawns, the Holy Therns.

For eons, the slow death of Barsoom progressed. The rivers and seas dried up, and the green lands turned yellow and brown. During this time a new race emerged and began to dominate the remnants of the great old kingdoms — the red Martians. A mix of the white, black, and yellow Martians, the red Martians evolved to become the rulers of much of Barsoom. However, their dominance was bittersweet. Their world was slowly dying, maintained by ancient technology whose secrets were lost to the ages. The red Martians used air travel and other technologies effectively, but rarely created things anew, instead adopting ancient knowledge where possible. The result was a culture of scattered city states surviving and flourishing as best they could in a world that was slowly perishing.

The Early Kingdoms of Barsoom is a vast period ripe for adventure, but it carries similar problems to prehistoric Barsoom. Burroughs wrote little of this period, covering literally millions of years in a few paragraphs of text. Thus narrators have incredible freedom to run campaigns in this period, but there is little to no guidance on how to do so beyond the basic information of Barsoomian races and some of the more long-lasting beliefs and traditions.

Recent Times

Of the recent history of Barsoom before the start of the Dotar Sojat Era, more is known. Information is still somewhat scattered, but far more facts and significant events can be confirmed. Helium uses its scientific acumen, airships, and diplomatic skill to expand and prosper, with its neighbor Zodanga jealously seeking to overtake it. Great and fearsome rulers such as Mors Kajak, Tardos Mors, and Than Kosis come to rule in their respective regions. Zodanga and Helium are bitter enemies during this period, warring often with each other. Other red Martian kingdoms have similar rivalries and conflicts during this period across Barsoom, with only a few nations becoming lasting allies, such as Ptarth and Koal.

The green Martian hordes survive, though existence is a constant brutal struggle. The Tharks and Warhoons war constantly, while the other hordes are more isolated from direct conflicts with their brethren. In Thark territory, a young warrior named Tars Tarkas distinguished himself under the tyrannical jeddak, Tal Hajus. Tarkas is a skilled, ruthless, and cruel warrior. However, his heart is softened when he meets and falls in love with Gozava, a green Martian woman who hates the cruelty of Thark life. Gozava's love improves Tarkas, showing him the power of positive feelings and true companionship. This change will become vital in later years when an older Tars meets a strange Earthborn man who will become his brother.

Eventually Gozava's "betrayal" of Thark culture by embracing love and family is discovered and she dies painfully at the hands of Tal Hajus. Gozava and Tars' daughter, initially raised in secret, is given to others to raise. Tars hides his despair and continues to rise among his people.

Where it Starts

The Dotar Sojat era begins shortly before the arrival of John Carter, with the nation of Helium in active conflict with its neighbor, Zodanga. During this time Carter arrives on Mars, has his first adventure on the Red Planet, and then stays in Helium for nearly a decade before supposedly sacrificing his life to save the planet. This era is one of early exploration and expansion, introduced to readers in the first and most famous of the Barsoom novels, *A Princess of Mars*.

The Thark hordes, ruled by the cruel and corrupt Tal Hajus, harass any who venture into their territory. Future jeddak and famed warrior Tars Tarkas has begun to distinguish himself, though he still grieves in secret for the loss of Gozava, his lover and mother of his daughter Sola. Tars keeps these connections to himself, knowing they could be used against him, instead conducting himself as a model warrior under the Tharks' current leadership. Outside of Thark lands, the other green Martian hordes war with each other and the other cultures of Barsoom, living much as they have since the seas dried up millennia ago.

In Helium, Tardos Mors and Mors Kajak guide their nation to prominence in Martian politics. However, Helium is besieged by numerous threats and its power is only a fraction of what it will one day become with Carter and his allies to champion the red kingdom. Mors Kajak's daughter, Dejah Thoris, is nearly worshipped by her people for her beauty, grace, and intelligence. She soon becomes one of the chief envoys for her father, grandfather, and the people of Helium.

In distant Ptarth, Jeddak Thuvan Dihn's daughter is similarly adored by her family and people. However, the young princess is taken from her nation when she travels down the River Iss and finds herself a captive of the Holy Therns. For this entire era, Thuvia remains a captive of the Therns, believed dead by her father and the people of Ptarth.

In other red Martian kingdoms, jeds and jeddaks rule and war amongst themselves. Trust and lasting alliances are all but unknown and many lives are lost in various conflicts. This state makes many paranoid, even driving some to madness. These include Vobis Kan, the mad Jeddak of Toonol, and Jal Had, Prince of Amhor and keeper of a cruel zoo filled with sentient beings. Many of these individuals will continue their terrible reigns through the era, with their inevitably messy ends to come in future times.

Elsewhere in the world, unknown to people of the red Martian lands, Salensus Oll rules over the northern Okar with cruel tyranny. The warlord has begun to plot his expansion beyond the yellow Martian lands, though it will be some time before these plans bear fruit. Numerous Okar agents and spies monitor the world outside their arctic home, though the Okar keep their existence and nature largely a secret.

The First Born serve the witch-goddess Issus. Operating as raiders and pirates, they take captives and riches in the service of their goddess, all the while maintaining the lie that they hail from the nearby moon. The location of their Omean Sea base is a closely guarded secret, unknown even to the Holy Therns; they manipulate and use others to guide Barsoom according to Issus' whims.

On Earth and elsewhere, roughly ten years pass. This covers the period between the mid-1860s to the mid- to late 1870s. On Earth, adventurers, entrepreneurs, and explorers seek to discover and sometimes exploit the wild corners of what the Barsoomians call Jasoom. Elsewhere in the solar system, kingdoms such as the Morgors of Jupiter rule, keeping out of Barsoomian affairs — at least for now.

Replacing Carter

It can be attractive to use the very beginning of the ***John Carter*** tales as a starting point for a campaign and either have the player heroes replace Carter as the great hero of Barsoom or portray Carter and his allies on new and different adventures than the those seen in the novels. This is completely acceptable and can make for a great alternate reality campaign. However, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Replacing Carter at the start of the novels means a lot of things won't happen unless the player heroes make them happen. Narrators should remember that without Carter, Dejah Thoris is a slave of the Tharks, Tal Hajus still rules the Tharks, Zodanga and Helium remain locked in conflict, and so on. In fact, at the end of this era the whole planet will suffocate if the player heroes don't step up and fix the failing atmosphere plant. Also, certain characters won't exist or will likely meet terrible fates. Carthoris won't be born, Thuvia will remain a Thern slave, and even characters like Sola or Tars Tarkas might eventually fall to enemy schemes or misfortune.

On the surface these prospects might sound like a great opportunity. Without Carter to save the day, the player heroes can step up to do so. However, some groups will balk at simply replaying Carter's "greatest hits." Others will be disappointed they don't get to interact with Barsoom's most famous Earthborn expatriate and the results of his grand adventures. Narrators wishing to explore this option should discuss it with their players to make sure an alternate reality campaign of this sort is what they really want to play.

Analysis of the Era's Stories

The following section summarizes and analyzes the stories of the era with an eye to how they can be used to inspire ideas, encounters, adventures, and campaign events for ***John Carter*** campaigns in the era. In the case of the Dotar Sojat era, there is only one official story to consider, *A Princess of Mars*. However, as the novel is the first and most famous of the Barsoom novels that spans nearly a decade of time, there is ample room to discuss its significance as a narrator resource.

This analysis is presented as a concise summary of the book's events mixed with callouts to various elements useful for narrators. It uses the novel's own chapters to organize this information. While this resource is primarily of use for narrators, there are specific notes and suggestions for players as well.

On the Novel and the Dotar Sojat Era

Technically the very end of *A Princess of Mars* falls outside the Dotar Sojat era, marking the beginning of the Prince of Helium era, a time marked by long periods of undocumented adventures and events. However, due to the awkwardness of summarizing and analyzing most but not all of *A Princess of Mars*, the whole novel is discussed in this book. ***The Prince of Helium era supplement*** will also discuss that time period in general, but will not directly analyze the novel as this chapter does.

A Princess of Mars

After a brief foreword from the narrator, a fictionalized version of Burroughs himself, the novel opens.

On the Arizona Hills

John Carter, or Captain Jack Carter of Virginia, introduces himself. He discusses his curious lifespan and lack of aging before explaining that after the Civil War he and a fellow ex-military officer and Virginian, James K. Powell, are prospecting in the hills of the Arizona territory in 1866. Carter also suggests a lifetime of varied experiences and adventures before the real story even begins, such as living in and fighting for the Sioux Nation.

Earthborn characters may wish to detail past adventures prior to arriving on Barsoom. This helps explain their atrchetype, starting talents, and other abilities. These adventures don't need to be defined in detail; a few sentences or even some bullet points are enough. Carter's discussion of his supposed longevity and agelessness can be seen as a hint of special powers or the world-weary post-traumatic musings of a Civil War veteran as desired.

Carter and Powell are attacked by Apache warriors. Powell is killed and Carter evades his pursuers, eventually coming upon a strange cave. After briefly mourning his fallen friend, he finds himself succumbing to fatigue and exhaustion.

James K. Powell makes an interesting alternative to Carter for alternate reality campaigns or an additional Earthborn adventurer. What if Powell, instead of expiring outside the cave, made it inside and was transported to Mars alongside (or instead of) Carter?

The Escape of the Dead

Carter awakens to find the Apaches have found his hiding place. However, a low moan from deep in the cave frightens them off. Before Carter can discover the source of the moan, he succumbs to vapors in the cave that paralyze him. Carter lays unmoving for a time until suddenly he can see himself standing naked over his own body in the cave. Looking out into the night sky, he feels a strange pull towards Mars before all goes cold and dark.

Players and narrators introducing Earthborn characters don't need to craft elaborate stories about how they came to arrive on Barsoom. A simple mysterious place, near-death experience, or similar event mixed with the strange phenomena so common to Burroughs' universe is enough.

My Advent on Mars

Carter awakens, somehow knowing he is on Mars. He finds himself near a Thark egg crèche — though he doesn't know this at the time. Soon he is surrounded by twenty Thark warriors who threaten the strange pale-skinned naked man so close to where they incubate their young. Startled by a four-armed twelve-foot warrior brandishing a spear at him, Carter leaps one hundred feet into the air. Shocked, the green Martians capture Carter instead of killing him.

Earthborn characters don't know of their Might-based bonus talents when they arrive on Barsoom. If they are truly brand new to the planet when a campaign begins, narrators should provide them with an amusing or dramatic way to discover their Earthborn strength and leaping ability.

A Prisoner

Carter is taken to a Thark camp as a prisoner. While being introduced to the chieftain by Tars Tarkas, the second-in-command, he is threatened by a Thark warrior, Dotar. Unwilling to be bullied, Carter strikes the Thark, killing him with one mighty blow. Instead of retaliating, the Tharks find this highly amusing and demand Carter demonstrate his leaping abilities. He refuses and is placed under the care of Sola, a female Thark.

Throwing a minion or two at a newly arrived Earthborn character during play is a great way to establish how their Jasoomian physiology grants them augmented strength on Barsoom.

Sola takes Carter to his sleeping quarters, where she places him under the protection and supervision of Woola, a calot. This encounter begins one of the most long-lasting and significant relationships Carter has during his life on Barsoom.

I Elude My Watchdog

Carter tries to escape Woola's constant attention, but finds the beast's speed and tenacity makes him all but impossible to avoid. Eventually he manages to escape Woola's presence by leaping up onto a sill where Woola cannot follow. Unfortunately, Carter's self-satisfaction evaporates when he finds himself suddenly menaced by a white ape.

Narrators can always spend Threat to create a sudden encounter or complication for the heroes to deal with. In this case, the white ape would cost Threat equal to its menace rating to appear in such a dangerous spot. Also, having a new beast appear as it attacks or otherwise engages dynamically with the player heroes makes the encounter more memorable.

A Fight that Won Friends

Carter finds himself facing two white apes, a mated pair determined to destroy and devour the displaced Virginian. Using a massive stone cudgel, one of the apes nearly kills Carter before Woola arrives to save him. Unable to abandon a beast that fought to valiantly to protect him, Carter joins the battle against the white apes. Carter and Woola triumph, but Woola is badly wounded. The victory is praised by the Tharks who witness it, though Carter must intervene to prevent Tars Tarkas from killing the wounded Woola.

Compassion and friendship are valuable tools in John Carter, as is success in battle against mutual foes. Using the renown earned through their heroics, characters can gain new allies and increased reputation. For Earthborn, who begin with no renown, these early adventures will help set the stage for how their social circles and reputation on Barsoom will evolve.

Child Raising on Mars

Carter witnesses the Thark child-rearing ritual, where numerous hatchlings are released to be taken in and raised by various females of the tribe. Sola gets a young male to raise and alongside this child Carter begins to learn the language of Barsoom — and he also begins to develop the telepathic abilities required to better communicate on the Red Planet.

Newly arrived Earthborn characters cannot speak Martian or engage in the telepathic communication that bolsters verbal communication on Barsoom. After a few short adventures or encounters, narrators should enable Earthborn characters to quickly learn the Barsoomian language and basic telepathic skills. Roleplaying the language barrier is fun for a time, but it quickly grows tiresome when one character cannot communicate with the rest of the group.

Fair Captive from the Sky

The Tharks seek to leave the dead city where they made camp, but the arrival of an airship gives them a target for their long rifles and savage attacks. The ship is brought down and along with supplies a lone captive is spotted by Carter — a beautiful red-skinned Martian woman. The woman tries to communicate with Carter but he doesn't understand and she turns away dejected and upset.

Characters first encountering a new culture, especially Earthborn newly arrived on Barsoom, are likely to miss cues, make mistakes, and send the wrong messages to those they meet. This is a great opportunity for drama and tension in a game, as well as a good way to reinforce that a character is out of their element and should take steps to learn and adapt.

I Learn the Language

Carter takes the time to learn the Barsoomian language and further learn the customs of the Tharks. Now able to better communicate with Sola, he discovers his caretaker is gentler and more sympathetic to the plight of the newly captured red Martian woman than the other Tharks.

Learning customs and languages isn't about skills, but scenes where heroes learn new things about the setting and its inhabitants. After a few such scenes, narrators should more freely give information about the setting to help characters understand and adapt. Also, once they learn the customs and traditions of a culture, the difficulty of tests relating to cultural understanding will be lower.

Champion and Chief

Though still not allowed to leave camp, Carter is otherwise treated as a respected member of the Tharks. Carter attends a gathering with Thark leader, Lorquas Ptomel, and the red Martian captive. This woman is revealed to be Dejah Thoris, princess of Helium. She explains she was leading a scientific mission regarding the planet's atmosphere.

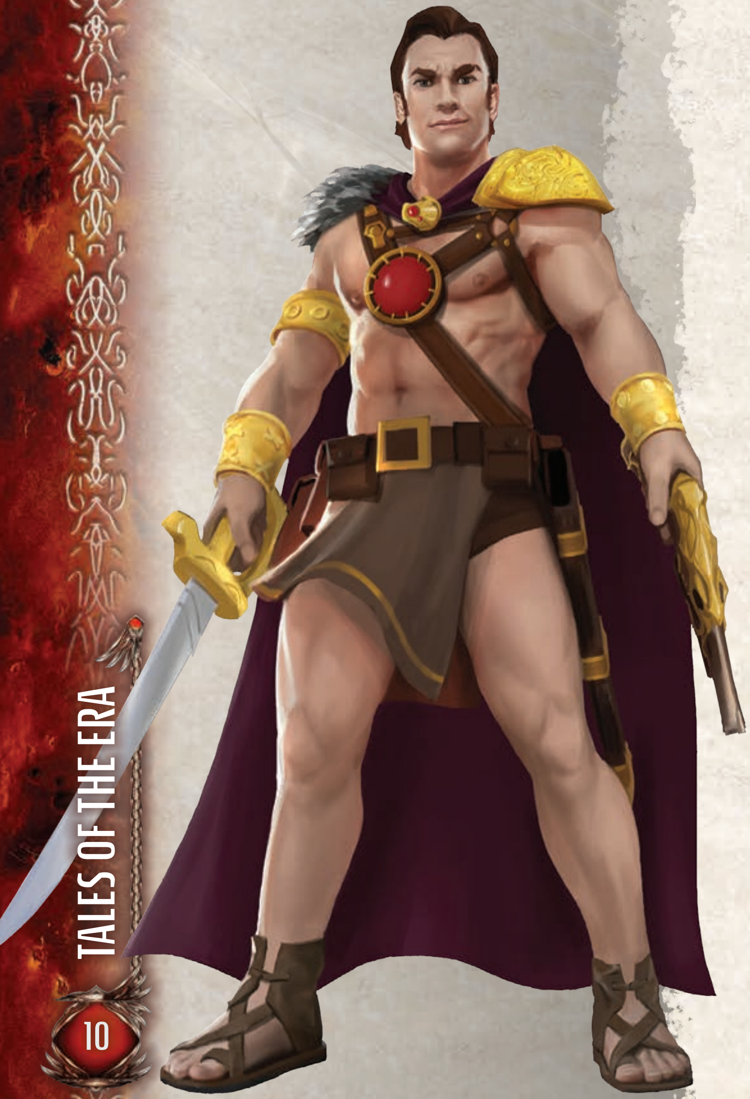
During the meeting, a young warrior knocks Dejah to the ground. Enraged, Carter kills him. Instead of being punished, he is awarded the warrior's possessions and allowed to claim Dejah Thoris as his charge, taking her under his protection to keep her from further abuses.

Unusual reactions such as promoting someone for killing a warrior in a horde are dramatic ways to showcase the differences in Barsoomian cultures. This is useful not only for characters without this knowledge, but also players who are not familiar with such concepts.

With Dejah Thoris

Carter has Sola care for Dejah, and another of the green women in the camp, Sarkoja, is solidified as a threat to both Sola and Dejah. Carter learns more of the history of Barsoom and its people from Dejah. She also reveals her people in Helium are aware of Earth, which they call Jasoom.

Earthborn characters can learn a lot from the locals when they arrive, but perhaps the most important lesson most can receive is that Barsoom for all its troubles is not a primitive backward land that needs Earthborn humans to "save" them, but a series of honorable and living cultures with a rich history who know more about Earth than any on Earth do of it. This realization helps equalize the relationship between Earthborn characters and Barsoom, as through their adventures they will no doubt aid and advance their new home in various ways.



A PRISONER WITH POWER

Carter is further honored by the Tharks with the possessions and retinue of the warriors he slew and given the name Dotar Sojat, a combination of the two fallen warriors. He also learns that thanks to Sarkoja, the Thark leader, Lorquas Ptomel, believes Carter is a threat from beyond sent to destroy him. Now aware the Thark chieftain seeks his death, the pressure to escape rises even as Carter grows in power among them.

The customs of Barsoom are best shown by example instead of explanation, and renown rewards can be used to illustrate and reinforce them. Giving a hero a title based on characters they killed in battle or other early adventures helps set the tone for how they interact with the campaign. If necessary, a narrator can even "loan" renown to a hero to cover the cost of such an accolade, paying it off with future gains during play.

LOVE-MAKING ON MARS

Carter spends his days learning the Thark ways, and bemuses the Tharks with his practice of treating his mounts and animal companions with kindness and affection. This impresses the Tharks, who realize if they adopt Carter's methods their thoats and calots will be superior to others in discipline and behavior.

Spending time with Dejah, Carter learns he has fallen deeply in love with the red Martian princess. When he responds to her calling him "my chieftain" with "my princess" she is both shocked and then amused — Carter has no idea that in red Martian culture such terms are used only between lovers and spouses.

Remember that the Carter tales are planetary romances. Don't neglect such elements if players are open to exploring them. One of the key classic elements of many romantic tales is the misunderstanding, miscommunication, or comedy of manners that sets the stage for a deeper relationship.

A DUEL TO THE DEATH

Carter pushes to understand his folly when dealing with Dejah Thoris and only serves to annoy and anger her. She storms off. Later when Carter finds out Sarkoja, the frequent troublemaker among the Tharks, has chained Dejah he is angry and ends up running afoul of an ally of the green woman, a hulking Thark named Zad.

Carter is challenged to a duel by Zad, and nearly dies when Sarkoja reflects the sun into his eyes during the fight. Dejah stops Sarkoja and is herself attacked. Distracted, Carter is stabbed by Zad through the chest. Before he blacks out, he lunges at Zad, hoping to take his enemy with him into death.

Outside interference in duels is a great way to show that a character is a wicked villain, especially given Barsoomian emphasis on honor. In a larger sense, those characters who flaunt custom and tradition for personal gain or for petty reasons reveal themselves as dishonorable and dangerous.

A character's first duel in a campaign is also a fine way to educate them on the various points of honor involving the conflict, such as using the same or lesser weapons. It also shows how quickly death can come to the unprepared.

Sola Tells Me Her Story

Carter recovers from his near-fatal wounds with the help of Martian medicine. When he is well enough to walk, Carter retrieves his sword from the body of Zad, who he slew with his final thrust. He also learns more from Sola about her background — that her mother was killed and her father is none other than Tars Tarkas.

Recovery scenes are a great time to learn more about characters, their history, and the world. It takes what could consist of lying around and dealing with Afflictions and makes it more interesting and engaging. Also, players unfamiliar with Barsoomian science will quickly learn of the amazing medicines available when they go from nearly dead to walking around with alarming speed.

This chapter also demonstrates the concept of core equipment. Though half dead, Carter is still able to easily recover his sword when he awakens. Regular equipment may be stolen or lost, but core equipment items and weapons are much harder to lose and far easier to replace.

Carter also learns that despite her recent anger with him, Dejah Thoris was beside herself when she believed Carter dead. Sola tells Carter she will reassure the princess that Carter lives and will recover.

We Plan Escape

Carter and the Tharks travel to the Thark capital where thirty thousand warriors wait with their corrupt and vile jeddak, Tal Hajus. Carter is reunited with faithful Woola and reconciles with Dejah Thoris. Carter is given his own quarters as befitting his status with the Tharks, but realizes he and Dejah are in danger due to the machinations of Sarkoja and the cruel nature of Hajus himself.

It is advantageous to allow player heroes some freedom to interact and explore even when technically hostage, captive, or prisoner. This can be as simple as giving them interesting cellmates to befriend, but in extraordinary cases heroes may be given respect and resources while still being effectively unable to leave a group or area.

When he is informed that Tal Hajus has decided he and Dejah are to be thrown to wild calots in the jeddak's arena, they decide they must escape. Splitting up to gather supplies for the trip to Helium by thoat, Carter soon realizes Dejah and Sola were discovered trying to leave and taken to Tal Hajus as prisoners.

Whenever things are going too smoothly, especially when allies or characters vulnerable to ambush or betrayal go off alone, narrators can use Threat to endanger them or complicate matters. These twists are very appropriate to Burroughsian-style adventures.

A Costly Recapture

Freeing Dejah and Sola from Tal Hajus, Carter knocks the jeddak unconscious and flees. With limited supplies and only some weakening thoats to carry them, Carter instructs his two companions to push on as he leads off a party of pursuers before he is overtaken. Carter fights valiantly but eventually succumbs to his foes' superior numbers and blacks out.

Tough decisions and self-sacrifice on the part of heroes should never be rewarded with instant death. Instead, have heroes who risk their lives to save companions and allies captured, beaten to unconsciousness, or otherwise subdued.

Chained in Warhoon

Carter awakens a prisoner of the Warhoon horde. The jeddak of the Warhoon, Bar Comas, wishes to save Carter for the amusement of the horde in the arena. As Carter watches, an internal conflict breaks out among the Warhoon and Comas is killed by his subordinate, Dak Kova. Taken to the dungeons, Carter is trapped for weeks or possibly longer in the darkness. During this time, he kills his jailer but unseen horrors in the darkness drag off the body before he can take the jailer's keys and free himself.

Sometimes events happen without direct player intervention, but if possible one or more of them should witness it to keep them involved. Also, imprisonment is difficult for many players to handle; they wish to escape immediately. Lengthy stays in captivity should be managed with time jumps mixed with tests that gradually put the heroes in a better place to escape when the opportunity presents itself or reveal something new about the setting.

Battling in the Arena

A short time later, the Helium airship officer Kantos Kan is brought to C With Kantos' help, Carter fakes his own death in the arena and escapes.

Mutual imprisonment is a classic place to find allies in Burroughsian stories. These meetings almost always lead to some battle, usually for the amusement of some terrible villain. Often this battle provides a method of escape. This may seem bit cliché to modern audiences, but it's a classic bit that captures the feel of the planetary romance. Narrators are encouraged to use these concepts in their own games.

In the Atmosphere Factory

Carter finds his way away from the Warhoon, is reunited with Woola, and is taken in by the caretaker of the atmosphere plant.

Some encounters are useful mostly to reveal one of the wonders of Barsoom. The Red Planet is home to many amazing places, and it's more interesting to come across an atmosphere plant or a lost city while wandering than a random cave or farmstead…

However, he soon discovers his savior intends to murder him to keep the secrets of the factory safe. Carter flees the ancient machine and soon comes across a farm owned by three brothers. The trio befriend Carter and give him red dye to hide his Earthborn skin tone. They also give him a thoat and other useful supplies before sending him on his journey.

That said, spending Momentum to secure help from the locals is a great way for characters to get back on track. Narrators should provide heroes with such opportunities on occasion to keep their travels from becoming too arduous or negative. Many good people live on Barsoom, and it's worth running into them occasionally to remind the heroes who they fight for.

An Air Scout for Zodanga

John Carter hears rumors of Dejah's death, but is skeptical. This skepticism is rewarded when he is reunited with Kantos Kan in Zodanga. He finds out his beloved is a prisoner of Sab Than, the prince of Zodanga. Than's father, Than Kosis, is planning to force Dejah to marry his son to unite the two warring kingdoms. Hoping to get close enough to Dejah to rescue her, Kantos and Carter join the Zodangan navy as scouts. While disguised, Carter wins the favor of Than Kosis through his heroism and is made a padwar in the palace guards.

Operating in disguise is discussed in **John Carter of Mars**, *Chapter 6: Growing Your Legend. Characters may spend entire sessions or even a whole adventure in disguise, earning renown and experience under their false identity. This can be a great way for more famous or distinctive characters to get an inside look into parts of the setting that would be otherwise closed to them. It also makes for a great eventual dramatic reveal. Also, while they shouldn't overuse the trick, narrators should remember that sometimes other characters may not be who they seem either. A heroic and helpful guard might be a prince on the run or a visiting dignitary might be a famed assassin.*

I Find Dejah

Carter, now guarding Than Kosis, sees Dejah brought to the jeddak. The princess confesses her love for Sab Than and asks Than Kosis to stop the war. Confused and upset, Carter follows her. He slays her guards and confronts her, demanding an explanation. Dejah confesses she loves Carter and not Sab Than, but to keep her promise and bring peace she must marry him. Carter leaves, upset but also determined to find a way to free Dejah and triumph.

Politics and the unshakeable honor of the promise on Barsoom leads to many frustrating but dramatic situations in the Barsoom stories. Narrators can use similar concepts to frustrate yet energize the player heroes, either by locking them into promises they must find a way out of or doing the same to beloved and allied narrator characters.

Investigating the killing of the guards, the Zodangans use their royal psychologist, a psychic with the ability to read the minds of the dead. They discover Carter and he must flee the palace.

The ability to read the minds of the dead (Necropathy) is provided later in this book (see New Powers*). Such remarkable abilities are uncommon but not unknown on Barsoom. However, narrators should take care not to overdo it with powers such as these. They can be interesting and reinforce the fantastic and alien nature of Barsoom, but if presented as too commonplace they rob players and narrators of the ability to effectively keep secrets or use mysteries in their campaigns.*

Lost in the Sky

Carter finds Kantos Kan again and tells him of his love for Dejah Thoris. To help his friend and his nation, Kantos agrees to help Carter by killing Sab Than since on Barsoom one may not marry the killer of their former spouse or betrothed.

Barsoomian politics and marriage customs make for great drama and roleplaying situations in games. One cannot simply skewer the evil jeddak or villainous odwar who forced your beloved into promising to marry them; they need to find a way to undo the promise or dispose of the villain in other ways. Unlike many plot hooks in fiction, these scenarios actually mesh seamlessly with the roleplaying game group — a character in this situation has several potential allies among the other player heroes to solve this problem for them.

Carter and Kan steal two fliers to help with their plan. Kan escapes but Carter's flier is damaged and he quickly finds himself lost in the unfamiliar skies of Mars. Though believing he is heading for Helium, after hours of flight, he comes across a different city.

Even from the relative safety of a flier, getting lost happens. This can be a great way for the narrator to introduce a new setting element or guide a character to a loose end that needs tying up before the adventure or campaign advances. Just don't overdo it; players will get frustrated or jaded if they never get to where they are going without a side trip or getting lost.

Tars Tarkas Finds a Friend

Seeing Warhoons and Tharks battling below, Carter finds his flier fired upon and grounded. He sees Tars Tarkas and Woola among the combatants and aids them. Tars acknowledges he now understands and embraces the concept of friendship once so alien to him, and he declares Carter his true friend and ally. Carter tells his friend of Sola, her relationship to him, and her struggles and troubles, especially under the jealous and vile Sarkoja. Tarkas confronts Sarkoja and informs her if she does not take her own pilgrimage down the River Iss, he will see she is dealt with. Sarkoja is gone by morning, never to be seen again.

Characters like Sarkoja, who disappear from the books and never return, present great opportunities for narrators. Perhaps they are still around in some corner of Barsoom, plotting and causing problems. Dealing with these characters also allows player heroes to ingratiate themselves with important narrator characters or tie themselves into the Barsoom stories in interesting ways.

Now fully aware of Tal Hajus' villainy, Tars has had enough of his jeddak. He challenges him for leadership and slays the tyrant, thus assuming command of the Tharks. He then pledges his forces to aid Carter. A vast army of a hundred thousand Tharks aided by fifty thousand allies from other hordes attacks Zodanga. Carter joins the assault, scaling the wall and opening the gates to aid the horde's attack.

Scenes such as this show the true power of friendship and powerful allies. They also show how personal conflict and singular heroics still dominate the action on Barsoom. From dueling for leadership of a great horde to infiltrating a city to open the gates for an invading army, the player heroes can and should be at the forefront of most action, even when vast armies and warring nations are involved.

The Looting of Zodanga

As the Tharks attack the city, Carter disrupts the wedding of Sab Than and Dejah Thoris. Carter kills Than Kosis, but is unwilling to kill Sab Than and rob himself and Dejah of the chance to be together. The Zodangans begin to overwhelm Carter and things look grim. Then Tars Tarkas bursts in with a force of Tharks. In the ensuing melee, Sab Than is killed.

Luck and Momentum spends can be a useful way for players to control when the "cavalry" arrives to help them. Narrators can also determine when this happens, but leaving it in the control of the players when possible means they never feel undermined by narrator character intervention. In the case of other player heroes arriving to help, of course, all bets are off — though players should work to avoid stepping on each other's dramatic moments.

After the battle Kantos Kan is found imprisoned. After freeing his friend, Carter declares his love for Dejah to all assembled and asks to marry her. She earnestly accepts.

Through Carnage to Joy

Reunited, the group must fight past the forces of Zodanga to return to Helium. While at first things seem dire, Carter and his allies manage to win an air battle against the Zodangan navy and hold off the vast and fearsome Zodangan cavalry until reinforcements from Helium arrive.

Big battles can be run as large-scale conflicts using the rules presented in the **Narrator's Kit** *that comes with the* **John Carter of Mars Narrator's Screen***. Alternatively, narrators can simply focus on smaller battles involving the player heroes and have the results of those conflicts mirrored in the armies and navies that war around them. Neither option is superior, it just depends on what narrators and players enjoy most.*

With the battle won, Carter is presented to Mors Kajak, the father of Dejah Thoris, as he helps to finally reunite father and daughter.

From Joy to Death

After ten days of celebration, the Tharks return to their lands and Carter and Dejah are soon married.

This marks the happy ending of the Dotar Sojat period and the beginning of the Prince of Helium period. What follows technically applies to the next era, but is discussed here as it occurs within the novel.

Carter fights for Helium for nine years. He and Dejah have a child, which is taken to the palace's egg chamber to incubate.

Carter no doubt has many grand adventures during this period, none of which are detailed in the Barsoom novels. He likely meets and fights alongside some truly extraordinary characters, also none of which are seen in the novels.

This period is largely a blank slate and a great opportunity for narrators and characters alike. They have nine years of potential adventures and heroics to create and integrate into the setting. Whether playing Carter and his allies or characters of their own creation, this represents nearly a decade of time to do with largely as they will.

This section also shows how — due to the long lifespans on Barsoom — great periods can be skipped over and jumped if desired. Characters who adventure in one era for a time might spend years at peace before returning in a later era. This trick is especially useful for characters who earn lofty titles and logically need to spend months or years engaged in affairs of state, or with campaigns that focus on legacy and dynasty where players end up playing the offspring and protégés of past characters.

One day word is brought that the atmosphere plant, which provides air to Barsoom, is failing and the keeper and his assistant are nowhere to be found. The walls of the factory cannot be breached and many feel this is the end of Barsoom. Unwilling to surrender, Carter rushes to the factory and manages to break inside using information recalled from his visit there years ago. Nearly suffocated, Carter makes one last attempt to reactivate the atmosphere plant before he blacks out.

Sometimes past adventures can be the key to future success, especially when they involve the wonders and secrets of Barsoom. Narrators should make note of special knowledge and unique opportunities the player heroes collect on their adventures and use them as plot hooks for future adventures.

At the Arizona Cave

Carter awakens in the cave in Arizona. He finds the mummified remains of an old woman and various hanging bodies and notices his own garments have crumbled off him from age. It is ten years from when he left Earth.

Now living on earth and rich from his mine, Carter finds himself distracted by thoughts of Mars. He does not know if he succeeded in saving his beloved Barsoom, but he believes his loved ones await him and that he will see them again.

Earthborn characters always have the chance that they will be yanked back to Earth somehow. This removes them from Barsoom, but during downtime or time jumps it may be a good way to create drama and roleplaying opportunities. After all, even as they are gone, life on Barsoom goes on and who knows what they will find when they return?

It may be tempting to drag Martians to Earth for an adventure as well, but remember that unless some scientific solution or strange phenomenon is employed, Martians would be substantially weaker on Jasoom. Playing warriors and adventurers with Might scores of 1 or 2 won't be very interesting or fun. Thus, narrators who decide to reach outside the regular scope of the game and set adventures on Jasoom should come up with some contrivance that explains why Martians keep their attributes intact. Whether this same effect could be used to allow Earthborn characters to retain the powers they possess on Barsoom is up to narrators who pursue this concept to decide.

And so ends *A Princess of Mars*. The novel covers ten years of the life of John Carter and his allies and introduces the reader to a fantastic world filled with wonders, strange beings, and adventure. Narrators have ample material to inspire plots and adventures from this novel alone, but it is of course only the first of many.

PEOPLES OF THE ERA

> *They make the laws as they are needed; a new law for each emergency. They are unfettered by precedent in the administration of justice. Customs have been handed down by ages of repetition, but the punishment for ignoring a custom is a matter for individual treatment by a jury of the culprit's peers, and I may say that justice seldom misses fire, but seems rather to rule in inverse ratio to the ascendency of law. In one respect at least the Martians are a happy people; they have no lawyers.*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

Playing in the Dotar Sojat Era

The Dotar Sojat era is the shortest era, encompassing much of *A Princess of Mars* and some time before. However, it is also one of the most challenging eras to play in, especially for groups with characters of varied backgrounds. Many discoveries and situations taken for granted during later eras are unknown territory here. This presents one great opportunity, but it also comes with associated challenges.

The opportunity is that without a default of cultural communication, frequent alliances between peoples, and exploration of lost and strange places, the player heroes get to be among the first to undertake these adventures. A red Martian explorer might be the first character from their nation to meet a far-off culture or make allies with a nearby green Martian horde or First Born outpost. An Okar envoy or spy might bring back some of the earliest intelligence to their people of the goings-on beyond the arctic north. This opportunity automatically makes adventurous characters and discoveries important and significant.

The Challenges of the Era

The challenge of this is twofold. First, with so much left undone, there are no footsteps to follow. Characters wishing to encounter a culture or group, or travel to a strange locale, rarely have anyone to look to for guidance. If a Helium soldier wishes to recruit green Martian scouts for a mission against Zodanga, they will have to deal with the fact nobody has ever tried that before and it is likely the reaction they will face will be combat, capture or enslavement. If a First Born wishes to live among the people of Ptarth, they will have to realize most of their new neighbors will believe them to be an alien pirate from the moon and that their own people will be constantly worried they will leak secrets of the Omean Sea base and the goddess Issus. Even something as simple as a Thark who is kind to his calot or thoat will be seen as strange and possibly weak — it was Carter who introduced kindness and care of beasts to the horde. These situations make great roleplaying opportunities, but they can be daunting for narrators and players alike.

The second challenge is that when new things are done, they may change the canon. This is a challenge in any era, but with so much left untold and yet to be done, the problem is magnified during this era. This isn't necessarily bad; there is no rule that ***John Carter of Mars*** campaigns must follow every published story perfectly. Nevertheless, it should be considered because it may alter the setting and disrupt player expectations. If a Thark warrior decides to raise his beasts with kindness and care before the arrival of John Carter in their midst? They will gain the same loyalty and advantages Carter did in *A Princess of Mars*, but if widely adopted then it is a deed already done. If a Kaolian soldier convinces their jeddak to begin to form a modest airship navy, then there will be at least some fliers when Carter visits the kingdom in later books. This might not seem like a big deal, but consider that the lack of fliers was a plot point that forced Carter to leave the nation on a two-man flier instead of with a larger force of allies.

Players should not feel constrained by canon a but enriched by it. For every established belief or future deed already destined to be fulfilled by John Carter or some other great hero there are countless other great and important tasks to be accomplished. Burroughs himself only touched on some of his world, leaving whole kingdoms and countless secrets to be uncovered by the ambitious and adventurous. Even narrators who hew closely to canon will find numerous places for their groups to explore and adventure without disrupting future events.

YOUR CHARACTER'S PLACE

Players concerned with their own place in the setting will have ample opportunity to explore and develop in ways Carter and his allies never did. Remember that not every great development in the novels occurs because of a major character of the stories. For example, the redesign of Helium's airships in future eras that doubled flight speed was due to an unnamed airman. Similar amazing discoveries and advances could happen because of the player heroes. And this doesn't even touch on grave threats that could arise and be defeated by a group even as Carter and his allies deal with some other danger. Just because Edgar Rice Burroughs never wrote the tale about how a band of red Kaolians, an outcast Warhoon, and a stranded Earthborn aviatrix saved Barsoom from a secret army of blue-skinned invaders or the deadly creations of a mad roboticist, that doesn't mean it never happened or that these heroics were one bit less impressive than John Carter's own. It's a big wondrous and imperiled world out there—go find your destiny.

MIXED GROUPS

Most groups will have characters of various backgrounds, from red Martians to Okar to Earthborn. While this is more commonplace in later eras, during the Dotar Sojat era such multicultural alliances are almost unheard of. In many cases, the player heroes will be the first characters in generations to work together, negotiate, and interact in any way that doesn't involve pistol shots and sword thrusts. In the case of characters such as the Okar and First Born, other characters might initially believe them extinct or carry strange ideas about them. For example, it is commonly believed during this era that the First Born are pirates from the moon, Thuria.

Cultural clash and cooperation is always good fuel for roleplaying, but here is it also one of the main themes of the era. Narrators should highlight the differences between player heroes, important narrator characters, and the cultures they encounter. The goal here isn't to show the supremacy of a single culture, but to create entertaining experiences.

EARTHBORN ARRIVALS

Earthborn characters during this period deserve special mention. Any Earthborn character coming to Barsoom during the Dotar Sojat era almost certainly believes they are the first Earthborn human to set foot on Mars. Even if they materialize right where Carter first appeared a few days after his own arrival, the Virginian had not built enough of a reputation to be known outside the few who encounter him. This makes Earthborn characters during this era very special, which may or may not be desirable. While it can be useful to have such an unusual and significant character in a group, there is also the danger that too often games become all about that character—especially one with super-Martian strength and other strange abilities.

Narrators with Earthborn characters in their groups may wish to start their adventures far from Helium and the events of the early Barsoom novels. This gives the Jasoomian transplant and their companions their own area to have grand adventures in before they eventually clash and combine with cultures Carter affects on his adventures.

NEW TALENTS AND ACCOLADES

The first half of this section presents new talents, flaws, and accolades appropriate to red Martian, green Martian, and Earthborn characters. The second half presents talents and flaws appropriate to any character, following the era's primary themes: discovery, exploration, and the forging of alliances. These elements are designed to be ready to pick up and use for both player heroes and narrator characters.

RED MARTIANS

RED MARTIAN TALENTS

The following talents are particularly appropriate for red Martian characters.

LORDS OF THE AIR (GRADE 4)

Your people are the undisputed masters of flight and you are among their most elite fliers. You can push a ship to perform in ways others cannot, gaining speed and performance beyond its normal capabilities.

- **Circumstance:** When piloting or commanding an airship.
- **Effect:** When piloting or commanding an airship, gain a bonus d20 for all tests relating to complex aerial maneuvers or tactics, including attempts to evade attacks or aerial chases. Also, any ship you command or pilot is considered to have 1 additional rank of armor (see *Chapter 6: Airships of Mars on page 83*), allowing it to ignore 1 point of stress per attack.

GET HELP (GRADE 3)

Like many from red Martian culture, you can find relatives, friends, followers, or other willing helpers across the planet. A mix of personal charm, shared cultural experience, and some extra effort help you secure assistance even in enemy territory.

- **Circumstance:** When seeking help.
- **Effect:** You may either leave the current scene or spend 3 Momentum between scenes to explain how you secured some minor but significant form of assistance for the next scene. This help can take a variety of forms, from weapons and equipment to minions to assist you. You may secure assistance or resources roughly equivalent to a total of three of the following helpful elements: a useful minion, an item, weapon, or piece of information. You may spend Threat to secure additional assistance, with a cost of 3 Threat per additional helpful element.

Note: Get Help works separately from, but compliments, appropriate titles and allies. A character with this talent who seeks aid from an ally or a place where they hold a title would gain the assistance both from their accolade and their talent. The narrator makes the final decision as to which forms of assistance a character can reasonably acquire with this talent.

ON THE SHOULDERS OF ANCIENTS (GRADE 2)

As the inheritors of Barsoom, your people are adept at taking the science and discoveries of ancient races and applying it to modern problems. While one might criticize your people for not inventing the great wonders and machines of the past, you are undeniably their primary caretakers. Driven to learn and adapt the lessons of the past, your passion and skill show in your studies.

- **Circumstance:** When using or studying ancient machines or data.
- **Effect:** When seeking to discover the operation of an ancient machine or reveal the secrets of historical scholarly or scientific data, you may always use your Passion or Empathy (pick one when you select this talent) and gain a bonus d20 on all appropriate tests.

ONE OF MANY (GRADE 1)

As the most common culture and species of Martian on Barsoom, few give you a second look in most areas. Even in areas dominated by another culture, many will simply assume you are a slave, captive, or attendant. This makes it very easy for you to go unnoticed if desired.

- **Circumstance:** When seeking to avoid notice.
- **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 on all tests to avoid notice or act like you're supposed to be somewhere you're not. This can be used outside red Martian settlements and kingdoms if you realistically could seem like a servant, mercenary, or attendant.

RED MARTIAN ACCOLADES

The following accolades involve red Martian cultures. They can be taken by other characters who earn these rewards through alliance and service to a red kingdom.

BELOVED LEADER (TITLE)

- **Cost:** 2 renown, added to an existing title
- **Effect:** While many cultures on Barsoom rule with a mixture of fear and respect, many red Martian kingdoms truly love their leaders. Even a mad or twisted ruler may win the devotion of their people if they treat them well and provide them with wealth and success. A character with the Beloved Leader accolade buys a title as normal with renown, but pays 2 additional renown over the base cost. This means that they are especially beloved for a character of their rank and position. This devotion has various roleplaying advantages. On successful tests to secure assistance or support from subordinates, if you generate Momentum, you gain 1 bonus Momentum.

Characters with the Beloved Leader accolade can simply add Beloved to their normal title, thus creating accolades such as Beloved Dwar, Beloved Princess, and so on.

HONOR GUARD (ALLIES)

- **Cost:** 3 or more renown
- **Effect:** Many red Martian nobles have a guard of sworn warriors to protect them. These warriors are among the elite guard of the red kingdoms. While other cultures may have similar protectors, the red Martian honor guards are considered some of the most versatile and skilled of their kind. Many are skilled swordfighters, crack shots, and adept pilots. Red Honor Guards cost at least 3 renown, being exceptional and at minimum a band of guards. Larger kingdoms have garrisons of guards that are much larger or have access to their own ships and additional resources, increasing their cost to 4 or higher.

RANKED PANTHAN (TITLE)

- **Cost:** One renown less than normal title
- **Effect:** While panthans are found in most cultures, the red kingdoms make extensive use of them in their frequent conflicts and wars against each other, green hordes, and other threats. Panthans on long-term contracts for a kingdom may be given ranks to allow them to fit into the structure of a kingdom's army or navy. However, these mercenaries are generally less respected and their service is understood to be limited. A panthan wishing to purchase such a title can do so for 1 less renown than normal. It is very uncommon for a panthan to hold a higher rank than dwar in a nation's military, though famed or adept panthans might rise higher. If a panthan ever accepts an offer to join a nation where they hold rank permanently, they may convert their rank into a normal title of the same rank by paying 1 additional renown. Noble titles and those which cost 10 or more renown are not suitable for this accolade.

RED MARTIAN FLAWS

DEVOTED LOYALIST

Red Martians, even more than most Barsoomians, tend to throw themselves into causes or behind great leaders. This is often to a character's credit, but if a cause or the orders of a superior runs afoul of other desires and loyalties it can cause serious problems. When refusing to aid your chosen cause or follow a leader's orders, you lose 2 Momentum.

SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY

Red Martians are among the most inquisitive people on Barsoom. Their culture rewards and encourages scientific curiosity and exploration more than their neighbors and rivals, encouraging many among them to seek out new wonders and mysteries, even under the most dangerous conditions. When you refuse to investigate a new discovery, wonder, or mystery, you lose 4 Momentum. If you can't lose 4 Momentum, take the rest in Confusion damage.

GREEN MARTIAN TALENTS

The following talents are suitable for green Martian player heroes and narrator characters. As they draw inspiration from green Martian culture and physiology, they are usually not suited for other characters as written. However, mechanically similar talents may be found with other characters.

THARK MARKSMANSHIP (GRADE 4)

Your people are unmatched with their mastery of the long rifle, and you are among the best of your people. With proper aim, you can even hit targets at ranges believed to be impossible by normal shooters.

- **Circumstance:** When shooting rifles, especially those of green Martian design.
- **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 on all rifle-based attack actions. If you are using a rifle of green Martian design and manufacture, you also gain a bonus 1 🎲 of damage and may ignore the increased difficulty for shooting at targets at Far range. In addition, for 1 Momentum you may make an attack on a target that is at Too Far range. This attack is at +1 difficulty.

Note: Despite the title of this talent, other green Martians may develop similar skills.

WHIRLWIND OF DEATH (GRADE 3)

Your four arms move in a flurry, swinging sword, spear, and fist in blinding arcs. This makes you a terror in close combat, capable of engaging and defeating many lesser foes with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum with a successful melee or rifle attack, generate an additional Momentum and your attack does an additional 1 🎲 of damage. You may also automatically defeat 1 additional minion-class foe with each successful attack.

Note: This ability may be taken instead of Four-Armed for War at character creation. If so, it only costs two grades of a character's talents instead of the usual three.

LINE THEM UP (GRADE 2)

As one of the most skilled long-distance shooters on all Barsoom, with care you may line up a shot to strike two targets with the same bullet. This allows you to drop numerous lesser foes with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When taking careful aim at multiple targets with a firearm.
- **Effect:** Spend your Movement action as well as your Conflict action to take careful aim at two targets who are in Immediate range of each other. You gain a bonus d20 on your attack roll and apply the results against both targets, who both may defend as normal. For 2 Momentum you can strike an additional target, provided they too are within Immediate range of your other targets.

SUPERIOR REACH (GRADE 1)

Using your towering height and long limbs, you can strike at foes far outside normal range with ease, hitting them even if they believe they have safely retreated outside your range.

- **Circumstance:** When making a melee attack at Close range.
- **Effect:** You may strike at a foe at Close range with your melee-based attacks without the normal increased difficulty or having to move to Immediate range.

GREEN MARTIAN ACCOLADES

These accolades involve green Martian cultures. Other characters who live among or interact with the green Martians may earn these as well.

FEARED LEADER (TITLE)

- **Cost:** 2 renown, added to an existing title
- **Effect:** Where the red Martians tend to adore their rulers, most green Martian hordes follow those they fear. Even noble leaders like Tars Tarkas are feared by their subordinates for their battle prowess, and this fear determines the number of challenges to authority a leader will suffer. This accolade costs an additional 2 renown on top the normal title cost. Feared Leader comes with various roleplaying-based benefits, and it also provides a bonus d20 for attempts to intimidate a subordinate.

Characters with the Feared Leader accolade can simply add Feared in front of their normal title, creating accolades such as Feared Jeddak, Feared Teedwar, and others. Note that a character can also be a Feared Named Warrior, meaning they hold no higher rank in the horde, but are feared by all who have not yet earned a name of their own.

NAMED WARRIOR (TITLE)

- **Cost:** 1 renown
- **Effect:** A character with this title has earned a full name in green Martian culture by killing another warrior and being given their name. Green Martians without this have only a single name to identify them and are treated with less respect. This is the lowest “rank” of any note or respect in a horde and any green Martian with a higher title will be assumed to also be named.

ENTOURAGE (ALLIES)

- **Cost:** Varies
- **Effect:** Green Martians are organized in groups within the horde, the smallest but most significant being a warrior’s personal entourage. Entourages are made up of female green Martians who make medicines and weapons, and see to other tasks; youths placed with the warrior and the females for training; and subordinate warriors who have not yet earned their names. They range from a couple of weak and ineffective individuals, to small clan-like structures that are a great boon to the warrior they serve.

An entourage is bought as a general ally within the green Martian horde. It rarely costs more than 4 renown, which would represent a collection of exceptional attendants and subordinates with useful skills and resources. A more typical entourage costs 2 or 3 points, reflecting a largely unremarkable group with one or two talented attendants.

GREEN MARTIAN FLAWS

Green Martian culture is famous for its unforgiving and ruthless nature. These make great flaws for green Martian player heroes.

ONLY THE STRONG

All Martians value strength, but none so much as green Martians. They laugh at weakness and allow the strong to dominate the horde, regardless of their other qualities. When you aid someone who is clearly weaker than yourself, you lose 2 Momentum. Note that you can recognize that allies have strengths in areas outside your own, but any who seem or have proven themselves overall inferior should be left to their own devices.

TRADITIONALIST

You are strongly attached to the customs and methods of your people. You don’t believe mates should bond and care for each other, or that children should be raised by their parents, and you hold to other common green Martian beliefs. You are skeptical of any outside method or process unless your superiors first accept it, and even then you take time to adjust. When breaking a tradition, even for valid reasons, lose 1 Momentum. When you actively try a new method or practice that runs counter to a tradition for the first time, lose 3 Momentum.

EARTHBORN

EARTHBORN TALENTS

These talents are designed to be used by Earthborn characters. As they reference Earthborn might and knowledge, they are generally inappropriate to other characters. Most of these talents qualify for the bonus talents Earthborn characters receive at character creation (see ***John Carter of Mars*** *core rulebook, Chapter 2: Creating Your Adventurer*).

STRONGMAN/WOMAN (GRADE 4)

You were strong on Earth. On Barsoom your physical power is legendary. You can perform feats of strength that leave even your fellow Earthborn humans on Barsoom in the dust. You can break chains, bend bars, and strike devastating blows in battle.

- **Circumstance:** When performing feats of strength.
- **Effect:** You deal an additional 2🎲 damage with any melee or thrown weapon attack. You also gain a bonus 2d20 on all Might-based tests involving feats of physical power and strength.

EARTHBORN INSIGHT (GRADE 3)

While Barsoom is glorious and full of wonders, sometimes good old Earth know-how wins out. You can sometimes apply insight or knowledge from your home world to a situation, coming up with solutions that elude others.

- **Circumstance:** When applying Earth knowledge to a problem.
- **Effect:** Come up with a decidedly Earthborn solution to a test, challenge, or other action. This might relate to some common Earth practice or be related to your own experiences on your home planet. Explain how your Earthborn knowledge is especially useful. You gain a 2d20 bonus to any related tests and generate an additional 1 Momentum if you succeed.

Note: Narrators can limit or veto use of this talent if necessary, especially if a player is always trying to apply Earthborn knowledge to every single test or action.

A DEFINITE CONTENDER (GRADE 2)

You are trained in the art of Earthly hand-to-hand fighting. While many on Barsoom are adept at unarmed fighting, your style is decidedly Jasoomian, using particular stances and your mass and muscle power to deliver punishing blows. Most of the Earthborn who possess this talent were trained as boxers and likely did some prize fighting, but this talent could also be used to portray characters skilled in bartitsu professional style wrestling, kickboxing, karate, and numerous other fighting arts.

What's more, your opponents soon learn to respect and fear your abilities as an unarmed fighter. While the average Barsoomian might laugh at you forgoing a weapon at first, their amusement quickly dies when you lay someone out.

- **Circumstance:** When fighting unarmed.
- **Effect:** Your unarmed melee attacks do an additional 1🎲 of damage. Furthermore, once you've defeated a minion or caused a Wounds affliction to another target, your unarmed attacks gain the Fearsome quality for the rest of the scene.

MIGHTY MIEN (GRADE 1)

Your might and physical prowess impresses others. This makes them more likely to respect and listen to you, making it easier to win friends and influence people.

- **Circumstance:** When engaged in social interactions.
- **Effect:** You may use Might as part of any social tests or conflicts provided the characters involved have seen displays or heard tales of your superior Earthborn strength.

EARTHBORN ACCOLADES

Earthborn don't possess special accolades. Combined with a lack of starting renown, this is their primary deficiency. An Earthborn character can only prosper on Barsoom with what they can win through effort, adventures, heroics, and behavior.

However, as relatively unique individuals on Barsoom, Earthborn possess one small advantage when it comes to gaining accolades — they face less opposition to gaining titles, allies, and other accolades that are often difficult for outsiders to gain. Thus an Earthborn character might become a dator among the First Born or be given a green Martian entourage if they join a horde more easily than characters from other Barsoomian cultures. The Earthborn is more likely to be adopted by one or more native kingdoms, groups, or cultures, at first as a curiosity but later as a unique and valued ally and friend. This is the story of John Carter, and it can be the story of other Earthborn characters on Barsoom as well.

Earthborn Flaws

Earthborn characters can come from a variety of backgrounds, but their alien nature and Jasoomian background tends to suggest certain flaws.

I DON'T KNOW MY OWN STRENGTH

You can't quite get the hang of your Earthborn might on Barsoom. In a scene where you fail a Might-based action, the narrator can offer you a success with a cost based on you using your strength in some particularly destructive or disruptive way. If you refuse, you lose 3 Momentum.

HOMESICK

Most Earthborn come to view Barsoom as their new home, but for some this is more difficult than others. If given a chance to return home, you must take it or lose 5 Momentum. If you can't afford the Momentum, take the excess as Confusion damage. This even includes following up rumors and questionable claims of ways back to Earth, though narrators may reduce the Momentum loss for exceptionally spurious claims or wild rumors.

Note: Characters with this Flaw are likely to eventually return home or change this flaw, adjusting to and accepting Barsoom as their new home. Also, offers to return a character to Earth must be credible or at least plausible — heroes are not penalized for refusing to believe a villain with no known way to reach Jasoom who offers to help them if they betray their friends and allies.

Other

The additional talents and flaws here can be suited to any character and expand upon those suggested in the core rulebook.

Other Talents

These additional talents touch on the central themes of the era: exploration, discovery, and the forging of new alliances. Some also reference airship combat and flying, as those rules are featured later in this book. They are appropriate for any character.

PATHFINDER (GRADE 4)

You travel through difficult terrain the way most people walk down a paved road. You can forge new paths where none have trod, avoiding obstacles and dangers along the way.

- **Circumstance:** When traveling through dangerous or unknown territory.
- **Effect:** You reduce the difficulty of overcoming terrain-based obstacles and dangers by 2. If this reduces the difficulty to (D0), you can automatically pass safely and at maximum possible speed through these areas. All remaining tests to overcome these dangers and obstacles gain a bonus d20.

PEACEMAKER (GRADE 4)

You are skilled at making allies and opening avenues of communication. You are also adept at not showing weakness or presenting your willingness to talk as a vulnerability.

- **Circumstance:** When seeking allies and negotiating.
- **Effect:** All tests to negotiate or seek aid from others gains a 2d20 bonus. In addition, you may automatically convince a minion-class character to stop any aggressive action and listen to you. You may spend 1 Momentum to extend this effect to an additional 2 minions.

BORN TO FLY (GRADE 4)

Innate aptitude combined with intense training makes you a natural flier. You are at home on fliers of any size, from personal fliers to massive battleships.

- **Circumstance:** When piloting a flier or airship.
- **Effect:** You reduce the difficulty of flying through rough weather and keeping your footing on ships during adverse conditions

by 1. You also gain a bonus 2d20 when piloting or navigating a flier. Finally, you may take one turn to assess and familiarize yourself with any flying craft and remove any increased difficulty due to operating unfamiliar equipment.

ENGINEERING EXPERTISE (GRADE 3)

You are a master airship engineer, able to maintain and repair fliers with a skill few can match. You can fix damage that would scuttle other ships and modify ships for special missions and voyages.

- **Circumstance:** When fixing or maintaining airships.
- **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 on all tests to repair or maintain airships. You may also make a **Cunning** + **Reason** (D2) test when you have at least a day to work on a ship. Success allows you to temporarily modify the ship, giving it +1 to any one ship attribute except Crew for the next scene. For 2 Momentum you may extend this benefit for the rest of the session.

BOLDLY GO (GRADE 3)

You are driven by a desire to make new discoveries and help your people by seeking out wisdom and knowledge in unknown and ancient places. You will not be dissuaded by threat, pain, or fear — adventure awaits!

- **Circumstance:** When exploring an unknown or ancient place.
- **Effect:** You may always use your Daring in tests to explore or navigate unknown or ancient places. You may also ignore the effects of the first affliction you suffer when in such places.

BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP (GRADE 4)

You may extend your hand in compassion and friendship, an all-too-rare act in this time of conflict and distrust. If another responds in kind, you both are strengthened by the experience.

- **Circumstance:** When making an offer of friendship or allegiance.
- **Effect:** Make an offer of friendship or allegiance to another character. This may be a simple gift, kind word, or offer of support. If accepted, you and your target both spend 1 Momentum but may immediately remove a Trauma- or Madness-based affliction. You may only use this talent on a particular target, once per session. If either you or your target attack or harm each other for the rest of the session, the affliction you removed returns and you automatically suffer an additional affliction of the same type.

AIRSHIP MARINE (GRADE 2)

You are adept at fighting on and below the decks of an airship. Tight confines and pitching decks don't bother you as they do others.

- **Circumstance:** When fighting on board an airship.
- **Effect:** Gain a bonus d20 to attack and defend while fighting onboard an airship.

EMPATHIC INSIGHT (GRADE 2)

You have a knack for understanding what others want and how best to win them over.

- **Circumstance:** When trying to understand others.
- **Effect:** Make a **Cunning** + **Empathy** test with a bonus d20 opposed by a target's **Cunning** + **Reason**. If successful, the narrator or player controlling your target must tell you one thing the character desires. The knowledge gained from this must be able to be conveyed in a single phrase or short sentence ("I want to rule Zodanga," "I wish to marry the princess," etc.) If you fail this roll, you cannot use this talent on the same target for the rest of the session.

Note: Variations of this talent that use different attributes are possible, though Empathy should always be included as it is key to this sort of action.

SURVIVE THE WILD (GRADE 2)

In the wilds of Barsoom there are only the prepared and the dead. You learn how to avoid the worst dangers and beast attacks, quickly adopting the best strategy to not only deal safely with these hazards, but also lessen damage taken when fortune turns against you.

- **Circumstance:** When taking damage from wild beasts or environmental dangers.
- **Effect:** As long as you have some prior knowledge or experience with a beast or wilderness-based danger, you gain a bonus d20 to defend against attacks and avoid dangers. In addition to this an airship under your control gains +1 armor against attacks and dangers of this type.

UNCOVERED SECRETS (GRADE 2)

You have begun to discover some of the lost or hidden secrets of Barsoom. These studies are often applicable when researching related fields or seeking similar wonders. They may also occasionally provide useful insight into Barsoom's past and future.

- **Circumstance:** When investigating mysteries and wonders.
- **Effect:** Pick a mystery, wonder, or field of study such as experimental medicine, the atmosphere plant, ancient cities and ruins, etc. Once per scene you may ask the narrator a "yes or no" question relating to this field and they must answer truthfully. If the answer is associated with a test or an action during the scene (transplanting a brain, repairing the atmosphere plant, exploring an ancient ruin, etc.), reduce the difficulty of that test by 1.

EXPERT BOMBARDIER (GRADE 1)

When using bombs and other indirect explosive weapons such as artillery and incendiaries, you are skilled at placing your attacks for maximum damage.

- **Circumstance:** When using bombs or artillery.
- **Effect:** When attacking with bombs, artillery, or other kinds of incendiaries, any successful attack does an additional 1 🎲 of damage.

MAD DISCOVERY (GRADE 1)

You are driven to push the bounds of discovery and invention, even to the point of insanity and beyond. Your mind is brilliant, but unstable — this is often both a blessing and a curse.

- **Circumstance:** When seeking new discoveries or inventions.

- **Effect:** Once per session, you may choose to suffer a Madness affliction to gain a Luck point. This point must be spent to help make a new discovery, gain a great scientific insight, or create a remarkable invention.

AIRSHIP GUNNER (GRADE 1)

You are adept at using ship-class weapons. This includes weapons used in fortifications, but not bombs.

- **Circumstance:** When firing ship-class cannons and guns.
- **Effect:** When serving as a gunner on an airship or firing other ship-class guns you gain a bonus d20 on all Conflict actions.

FEARLESS ABANDON (GRADE 1)

You refuse to quit or retreat, instead throwing yourself at fearsome foes and situations. Even in the face of certain death or the terrifying unknown, you push ahead. You may still fall in battle or lose, but you are unlikely to succumb to terror.

- **Circumstance:** When throwing yourself into danger.
- **Effect:** As long as you act with appropriate recklessness and boldness, you reduce any Fear damage taken by 1 per attack or instance.

OTHER FLAWS

These new flaws fit well with the era and its themes, though they can be used for characters from any era.

EXPLORER'S DRIVE

You are driven to explore new places and make new discoveries, regardless of the dangers. When you retreat or turn away from fully exploring or investigating somewhere you haven't been, for whatever reason, you lose 3 Momentum. You do not lose this Momentum if you black out or are otherwise incapacitated or physically prevented from exploring.

DIPLOMACY FIRST

You always try to find a peaceful solution for a problem. When you jump to violence before attempting to calm or otherwise defuse the situation, you lose 2 Momentum.

PROUD EXILE

You were driven out of your community and exiled for an offense you committed or were accused of committing. You cannot return home until you clear your name, and you always seek to prove your worth to those from your homeland. When given a chance to clear your name or prove to a citizen of your homeland that you are honorable, worthy, or capable, you must act to seize this opportunity or lose 4 Momentum. If you cannot afford the Momentum cost, you take the excess in Fear damage.

ALTERING EXISTING TALENTS

Most of the talents presented in the core rulebook and other supplements for ***John Carter of Mars*** will work easily along the material presented here. However, it is worth considering that adding optional or additional rules in this and other supplements may sometimes merit tweaking an existing talent. For example, narrators wishing to make frequent use of the expanded airship rules in this book may wish to tweak the Airship Pilot talent under the Airship Officer archetype (see ***John Carter of Mars***, *Chapter 2: Creating Your Adventurer*) to provide its bonus only when piloting an airship instead of "crewing or commanding" as it currently reads.

This is just one example. It is also possible an optional rule may render an existing talent less effective. Optional rules should expand the scope and enjoyment of the game, not render talents overpowered or useless. Should these situations arise, narrators should discuss them with their players and find appropriate solutions.

CHAMPIONS OF THE ERA

> *"A warrior may change his metal, but not his heart."*
> – Princess Dejah Thoris, *A Princess of Mars*

Though land, technology, and philosophy are all important to the warp and weft of stories woven on Barsoom, it's the people who create the pattern. They make the tales meaningful by giving them stakes even sedentary Earth dwellers can relate to and root for. Without them, any description of Barsoom would be little more than a travelogue.

Ferocious and honorable green Martians fight terrific battles across alien plains of ancient seas, but their pride and honesty inspires even as their violence terrifies. Hidden within the bloodthirsty masses are individuals capable of great love, care, and nurturing.

Their red cousins rebuild civilization in the heart of crumbling cities, and we can identify with their optimism, valor, and ways of being in love. They live with religious awe of tradition and the past, but a few question the wisdom of stagnation and are willing to make changes when given the right impetus.

A simple soldier from Virginia can move among them, stirring these mighty peoples in ways that stir our earthly hearts as well.

This is especially true of the Dotar Sojat era, where multiple millennia pass with the quo remaining approximately status. The sun rises and sets over a rough-shod world much like it was the previous thirty thousand sunrises and sunsets. A red city might fall to seige, or a green horde might be extinguished in a battle, but others rise to take their place and fall in their own time. The big picture of the Red Planet orbits essentially unaltered.

But the people change. Even if Barsoom has seen the acts of a particular drama play out before, the dramatis personae are different. These are stories of an individual's trials and triumphs, of how they rose to power, how they incurred enemies, and how their friends rose to their aid. That's what makes unrequited love different the millionth time it happens beneath the same sun and moons.

With the technologies and capacities of each Martian race widespread and not deeply understood during this era, would-be heroes can't count on their equipment, or even the ground they stand on. In the Dotar Sojat era, a person is instead defined by their friends and their enemies. Even the mightiest heroes like Kantos Kan, Tars Tarkas, and John Carter would only have gotten so far without the support, loyalty, and assistance of those they kept close.

Indeed, almost none of the most important events in *A Princess of Mars* would have occurred had John Carter not fallen in love with Dejah Thoris. Few of those events would have worked out so thoroughly to Carter's favor were he not in league with two of the mightiest warriors of the age, one from each of the known Martian races.

Similarly, Sarkoja's hatred of Sola was what put Dejah Thoris in the clutches of the foul jeddak Tal Hajus, with her rescue leading step by step to the unified attack that ended the Zodanga-Helium war. Without Tars Tarkas's powerful hatred of Tal Hajus, Dejah Thoris's rescue would have been impossible. Nor would that brave Thark have slain the jeddak in Carter's hour of need, putting himself in a position to lead the Tharks against Zodanga. Likewise, Kantos Kan's hatred of Sab Than combined with his affection for Dejah Thoris to bring his forces to bear at the right place and in the right time.

NEW NARRATOR CHARACTERS

The most notable personages of the Dotar Sojat era are already detailed in the John Carter of Mars core rulebook. Below you will find several individuals of lesser fame, but who still played a role in the story told in *A Princess of Mars*.

TAL HAJUS

RUTHLESS THARK JEDDAK

"Green Martians are absolutely virtuous... with the exception of such degenerates as Tal Hajus."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
5	6	4

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
8	4	5

TALENTS

FEARSOME DEMEANOR (GRADE 3)

Your reputation for violence and ruthlessness strikes fear in your enemies and allies alike.

- **Circumstance:** When trying to frighten, intimidate or threaten in social situations.

- **Effect:** When trying to intimidate, frighten, or threaten a target, you can make an opposed attack roll against them using **Might + Passion**. If successful, you deal 2🎲 damage with the Fearsome quality. If the target succeeds on their defense, they are immune to this talent for the rest of the scene.

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.

- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

MASSIVE BULK (GRADE 6)

You can use your large size to your advantage. You may not be fast or quick, but you hit hard. Your size also makes you hard to damage in physical conflicts.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking in melee combat.

- **Effect:** You may ignore the first Wounds affliction you suffer in a scene. In melee combat, you may always use your Might to attack and deal a bonus 3🎲 of damage.

BACKGROUND

For many decades Tal Hajus ruled the powerful Thark horde as their jeddak, and held his position with a reputation for utmost cruelty and subtle manipulations. If he became aware of a Thark jed who might one day threaten his rule, he wove a web of half-truths and accusations which led inexorably to the arrest and torture of his rival. Thus he kept his position and power despite being a far inferior fighter than those under his rule.

Unlike other jeddaks of the green Martians, he grew fat and complacent during his long reign. He trusted his power and the fear his Tharks held for the tortures in his dungeons to keep control over his domain. Many disliked obeying the orders of such a ruler, but tradition demanded obedience and terror prevented an outright coup.

Over long years, Tal Hajus descended into debauchery and vice. He fell from a fierce and competent warlord into a corrupted and corpulent despot. What many spoke of openly about the Jeddak was chilling and disgusting enough that it is best not to think deeply on what some whispered in secret.

Though this slow slide from virtue to vice shocked and appalled his subjects, Tal Hajus continued to refine his techniques of intelligence gathering, accusation, and arrest so none dared openly speak against him. And so he ruled over better men and women until a series of events brought him to ruin.

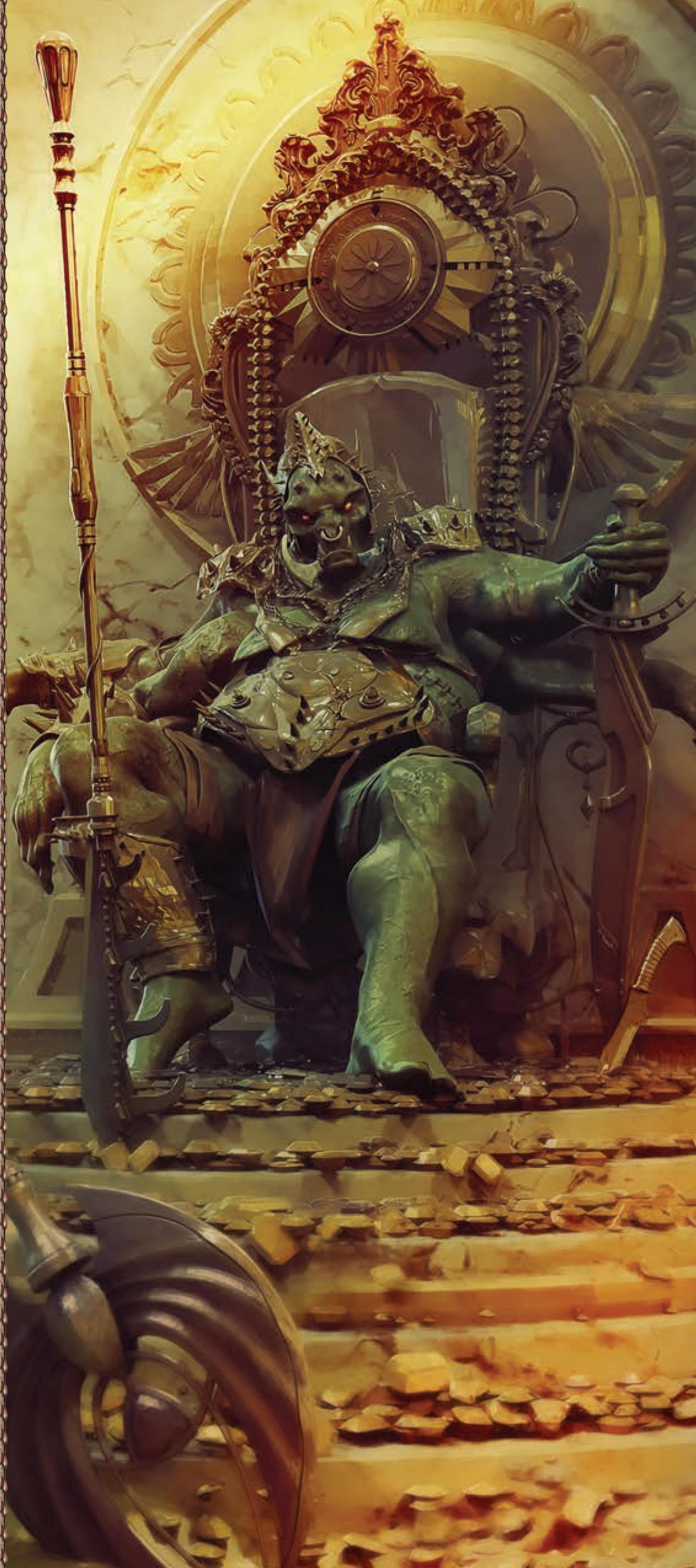
When one of his Thark hordes, led by Lorquas Ptomel, captured the red Martian princess Dejah Thoris, they brought her to Tal Hajus's capital at Korad. Upon seeing her fair form and lithe frame, the jeddak's lust grew out of control. The princess was brought to his throne room to begin the torture and execution that is traditional on Mars for captured members of any enemy group.

But the simple torment of the beautiful Martian woman was not enough for Tal Hajus, nor was ravishing her privately in his own quarters. He announced before all of his Thark jeds that he would spend one hour with her, during which time she would be entirely his. Afterwards, and only afterwards, would he allow her to be tortured to death by the cruelest and most loathsome of his cronies. This shocked even the hardened sensibilities of his closest advisors, but still not one stood up to him. Tars Tarkas nearly did so, but still held his blade, leaving the chamber when ordered out with the rest of the jeds.

Dejah Thoris was alone in the room but for Tal Hajus and, unbeknownst to her, John Carter who was watching from hiding. When the jeddak moved to touch her, the Jasoomian sprang from his concealment intent on slaying the monstrous green Martian. At the last moment, though, he thought he could not deprive Tars Tarkas of the joy of killing his enemy, so he knocked Tal Hajus senseless with a single punch, and bore Dejah Thoris away.

Later, after John Carter had serendipitously helped the Tharks defeat the Warhoons in a pitched and losing battle, Tal Hajus demanded he be bound to a column for immediate torture and, much later, death. At that time, Tars Tarkas stepped forward, proclaiming the status John Carter had earned among Lorquas Ptomel's chiefs and called out for the Jasoomian's rights as such a warrior to be respected.

Tal Hajus raged at the insolence, giving Tars Tarkas the opportunity to goad him toward a challenge for the throne. Following Tars Tarkas's lead, the jeds of Thark finally moved to rid themselves of their cruel and cowardly ruler. The fight took place then and there, where Tars Tarkas defeated the diminished jeddak easily, becoming leader of the Tharks with but a single swipe of his blade.



SAB THAN

YOUNG PRINCE OF ZODANGA

"Sab Than, the prince, who is commander of this division of the navy."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
7	5	4
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
6	5	6

TALENTS

DECORATED OFFICER (GRADE 3)

You are one of the most respected and famed officers in your nation's military. Your reputation is a great boon when leading troops or charming your superiors.

- **Circumstance:** When dealing with military personnel.
- **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 when dealing with military personnel of your nation in both tactical and social situations. This includes commanding airships that belong to your nation's navy.

BOLD PRINCE (GRADE 2)

You are uncompromising and unwavering in your service to your nation, your father, and your own ambitions.

- **Circumstance:** When making tests related to advancing the position of your nation, family, or yourself.
- **Effect:** When working directly to advance your nation, your family, or yourself, you may treat your lowest trait in a test as if it were one higher. You also gain a bonus d20 for such actions.

BACKGROUND

Son of Than Kosis, Sab Than is Prince of Zodanga during the end of the Dotar Sojat era, and during the city's war with Helium. A proud and skillful man, he rose to command within the navy through his own merits, abilities, and valor.

Though they have not been put to record or song, his exploits during this time were the pride of his father and his city. After all, he was one of the most decorated officers in the greatest war in Zodanga's long, storied, and relentlessly martial history.

When Zodanga captured Dejah Thoris after her escape from the Tharks, Sab Than soon fell in love with her. Although Dejah Thoris was in love with John Carter. Seeing an opportunity to help her people, she made an offer to the Zodangan prince.

She promised she would marry Sab Than if he could get his father to end the war with Helium. Sab Than brought the news to Than Kosis, who was as indulgent of his son as any Earthborn with their children.

At the time, Dejah Thoris's father had put much of Helium's military might and other resources to the task of locating and rescuing her. Because of this, the war itself was going very poorly for Helium, and so the deal was struck, and the wedding arranged with great haste.

Though this was a happy day for the young Zodangan, it was also the day that sealed his fate. A vow of marriage is binding for life, and nothing would stand between John Carter and his love. Martian tradition forbids a woman from marrying her husband's killer, but Kantos Kan struck the prince down during the razing of Zodanga, ending the marriage before it truly began.

THAN KOSIS

CHARISMATIC JEDDAK OF ZODANGA

"Behind the throne there was a narrow doorway and in this Than Kosis now stood facing me."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
6	7	4
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
5	6	6

TALENTS

KEEN STRATEGIST (GRADE 3)

Your keen grasp of strategy allows you to stay one step ahead of your foes and properly use your allies and subordinates in your plans.

- **Circumstance:** When planning large scale strategic schemes, both military or political.
- **Effect:** When planning large-scale military actions, political schemes, and other strategic endeavors you may ask one "yes or no" question to the narrator about the situation and gain a 2d20 bonus on all actions to form and execute your plans.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT (GRADE 5)

You are adept at using rewards, praise, and favors to win over subordinates. Your followers are exceptionally loyal and focused with you watching over them.

- **Circumstance:** When helping subordinates recover from afflictions.
- **Effect:** You may spend a spoken action giving encouragement or praise to a subordinate; the target of your praise may remove up to 2 Trauma or Madness afflictions. You may split this effect between two targets, allowing them both to recover an affliction each. You may only use this to remove a number of afflictions equal to your Passion per scene (currently 6).

BACKGROUND

Jeddak of the red city of Zodanga during its war against Helium, Than Kosis very nearly led his people to ultimate victory. Prior to the war, he had already helped his city to grow above the surrounding communities until it was second only to Helium itself.

Once the conflict commenced, Than Kosis led his jeds to at least as many victories as defeats. He proved an able leader, brilliant tactician, and better at subtle points of strategy than many red Martians before him. He fought his mighty rival to a long and bloody stalemate where both sides lost thousands without gaining any true ground.

Than Kosis and Zodanga gained the upper hand when Dejah Thoris was captured by the green Martian Tharks. While Helium spent its resources searching for the missing princess, Than Kosis kept his focus on the war and scored victory after victory over his archrivals. The conflict might have ended with Helium as Zodanga's vassal had not his son fallen in love with the princess, who had come to be a prisoner of Zodanga.

As the price of her betrothal to his son, Dejah Thoris demanded Than Kosis end the war with Helium and sue for peace. The deal was made, and the jeddak presided over the beginning of the wedding ceremony. In truth, the beginnings of that ritual suggested Than Kosis was prepared to welcome his new daughter-in-law with an open heart, and to not treat her as a captive slave or lesser member of the household.

However, before the ceremony was completed John Carter came to Zodanga with two different armies at his back. They ransacked Zodanga on the day of the wedding. Though a terrific fighter, Than Kosis died in his own throne room at the end of John Carter's sword.

BAR COMAS

BLOODY-HANDED JEDDAK OF WARHOON

"He was frightfully scarred, and also decorated with the breastplate of human skulls and dried dead hands."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
6	6	4
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
6	4	6

TALENTS

DARK INNOVATIONS (GRADE 4)

Your introspection and thoughtfulness manifest a terrible ability to destroy your enemies and use your allies.

- **Circumstance:** When using a trick, ploy, or new idea.
- **Effect:** Once per scene add a 2d20 bonus to any test that uses a trick, ploy, or new idea — this can be anything from a combat tactic to a social theory. You may also use Reason for this test if desired, regardless of its nature.

FEARSOME BRAWLER (GRADE 3)

In unarmed combat you have few equals. Your attacks and reputation as a fighter give even experienced fighters pause.

- **Circumstance:** When fighting unarmed.
- **Effect:** Your unarmed attacks have the Fearsome quality and do an additional 2 🎲 of damage.

WHIRLWIND OF DEATH (GRADE 3)

Your four arms move in a flurry, swinging sword, spear, and fist in blinding arcs. This makes you a terror in close combat, capable of engaging and defeating many lesser foes with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum with a successful melee or rifle attack, generate an additional Momentum and your attack does an additional 1 🎲 of damage. You may also automatically defeat 1 additional minion-class foe with each successful attack.

BACKGROUND

Had Bar Comas survived his first meeting with John Carter, it's likely many events of the Dotar Sojat era would have ended differently.

Jeddak of the Warhoon horde at the beginning of the Dotar Sojat era, Bar Comas was unusually curious and intellectual, less inclined to wanton cruelty than the jeds who served him. He rose to his position through a combination of maneuvering carefully and intelligently, and applying his absolute mastery of hand-to-hand combat in cunningly-chosen duels and challenges. In later years, some have speculated he may have been known to his parents, and raised with special affection like Sola of the Tharks.

Under his leadership, the Warhoon horde flourished. They plundered more, died less, and grew in renown and affluence. Within a decade none moved in Warhoon territory without great caution, and their reputation rivaled that of even the infamous Tharks.

Despite this, his "softer" traits and relative youth made Bar Comas an unpopular ruler among many of the older and more bloodthirsty of his jeds. Many felt his curiosity meant he could not lead with the unthinking aggression of a true Warhoon leader, while others simply disliked his more intellectual and emotional style of leading, speaking, and being. Still, a sufficient number respected his tactical brilliance enough to follow his commands, trusting his intelligence to lead the Warhoons to success and victory.

With many enemies, Bar Comas held onto his position first and foremost by the pure unparalleled brilliance of his hand-to-hand fighting ability. Though easily bested with most green Martian weapons, he was masterful while unarmed, and Martian tradition forbids engaging in a duel using a weapon of greater power than that of one's opponent. Those who challenged him died under his four fists, two legs, and twin sharp tusks.

When Bar Comas met John Carter, at the time a captive of the Warhoon jed Dak Kova, his impulse was to learn more about the strange being. Dak Kova, who wished the new and different creature put to death, demanded to have his will over that of the jeddak. Dak Kova used the conflict as an excuse to challenge his jeddak publicly. As is customary among green Martians, an immediate and deadly combat ensued.

John Carter has remarked that, even in his own sanguineous lifetime, he had never before or after seen a hand-to-hand combat so ferocious, bloody, and savage. Bar Comas almost won the day, overpowering and outfighting Dak Kova during many minutes of brutal fighting. In the end, Dak Kova escaped a clinch in such a way as to allow him to score a fatal wound.

The young jeddak bled out so quickly not even the near-miraculous healing salves and skills of the green Martians could save him. Had he lived, it is quite likely his curiosity and intellect would have ultimately numbered him among John Carter's friends, standing proudly among such luminary names as Kantos Kan and Tars Tarkas.

Dak Kova

SAVAGE WARHOON CHIEF

"He was a huge fellow, terribly scarred about the face and chest, with one broken tusk and a missing ear."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
6	5	3
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
8	5	5

TALENTS

DESPERATE RESERVES (GRADE 2)

You can dig deep and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

- **Circumstance:** When hurt and outclassed in a conflict.
- **Effect:** When you are suffering from more afflictions than an opponent during a conflict, you gain a bonus d20 to attack and defend against them.

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

SAVAGE FURY (GRADE 3)

All rage and fury, you cannot be contained in battle, dealing terrible blows that rend flesh and shatter bones.

- **Circumstance:** In melee combat.
- **Effect:** Your attacks in melee combat deal an additional 2 ⚀ of damage. This works on all melee attacks, armed and unarmed.

BACKGROUND

Jeddak of the Warhoon horde during the end of the Dotar Sojat era, and for many years afterward, Dak Kova did not begin life as a Warhoon. Rather, he was a warrior of a lesser tribe from the west, captured and forced to fight in the Great Games. He acquitted himself so well that, after he slew an enraged zitidar with nothing but a rock and a level of reckless rage shocking even to the Warhoons, the jeds of that horde unanimously called for him to be made a Warhoon then and there. Their jeddak, whose name is lost to time, agreed immediately.

Dak Kova rose among the Warhoon horde through nothing more than bloody-minded savagery. No rival among the Warhoons could speak ill of or to him without immediately being attacked with murderous intent and nigh-unmatchable fury. When he had slaughtered enough warriors, he was challenged by a chief and killed him in three passes of a short sword.

As a chief, he killed at will among the warriors of Warhoon, and continued his policy of immediate and fatal violence against any equals who opposed him. Eventually, this trail of bodies led to a challenge from one of the Warhoons' jeds. In that battle, Dak Kova lost half of one of his tusks, but it was he still standing and drawing breath at the end.

The jed Dak Kova was a source of fear even among Warhoons, and nothing short of a natural catastrophe when set loose among any members of a different horde or race. His men died by the hundreds under his rash and bloody leadership, but killed twice as many foes as any other group of warriors and chiefs.

When Bar Comas was elevated to the status of jeddak, Dak Kova's jealousy pushed him to hate the younger, softer-minded Martian. Why, he wondered, would someone he considered soft and weak be allowed to order him about? But the jeddak was larger and stronger, and renowned for his abilities in unarmed combat.

It was during this time that Dak Kova's horde captured John Carter while the Jasoomian was fleeing from the Tharks. When Dak Kova presented the curious being to his jeddak, Bar Comas wanted him spared for further examination rather than immediately executed. At the end of a battle he nearly lost, Dak Kova speared Bar Comas with his remaining tusk, taking the title of jeddak for himself.

It was under his rulership that John Carter was captured and thrown into the dungeons beneath the city of Warhoon. During his months imprisoned there, the Jasoomian met Kantos Kan, also a prisoner of the Warhoons. Dak Kova could not then have known how allowing those two great warriors to meet would impact his personal future, and the future of his Warhoons.

At Dak Kova's command, the two were forced to fight each other in the great games of the Warhoons. Kantos Kan, the apparent winner, thus secured his freedom while John Carter played dead on the field of battle and later escaped under cover of darkness.

Had Dak Kova befriended John Carter, as Bar Comas almost certainly would have, two great green Martian hordes might have allied to array against Zodanga. The results of such an alliance, had it lasted, can only be speculated upon.

ZAD

BRAVE THARK WARRIOR

"Zad; a big, hulking, powerful brute."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
6	4	3
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
7	5	3

TALENTS

DEADLY PAWN (GRADE 3)

Not exactly a big thinker, you are at your deadliest and most driven when another points you at a threat and tells you to destroy them.

- **Circumstance:** When commanded to slay or fight another.
- **Effect:** If directed or otherwise commanded to fighting another, you gain a bonus d20 to attack and defense and deal an additional 1 🎲 of damage.

WHIRLWIND OF DEATH (GRADE 3)

Your four arms move in a flurry, swinging sword, spear, and fist in blinding arcs. This makes you a terror in close combat, capable of engaging and defeating many lesser foes with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum with a successful melee or rifle attack, you generate an additional Momentum and your attack does an additional 1 🎲 of damage. You may also automatically defeat 1 additional minion-class foe with each successful attack.

BACKGROUND

Zad's exploits are largely lost to legend, though it is known that he was a competent fighter yet to win a place among the chiefs of the Tharks. He is remembered best for how he died.

Sarkoja, an influential but malicious Thark woman, kept at any given time a dozen or so young Thark warriors under her will. She promised them access to her power, implying she could hasten their elevation to the status of chiefs and jeds. Zad, a powerful fighter but known to be rather dim, was one of those warriors.

Sarkoja hated John Carter for his tenderness toward her rival Sola, and later for showing that same kindness to the red Martian captive Dejah Thoris. While Lorquas Ptomel's Tharks were marching to meet their jeddak Tal Hajus, Sarkoja urged Zad to challenge the Jasoomian to battle. John Carter accepted without hesitation.

Zad accounted for himself well during the final few moments of his life, though John Carter's Earth-gravity strength made him by far the better fighter. When Sarkoja blinded the Jasoomian by flashing sunlight off a reflective surface, Zad gave him the worst wound he had received before, or would receive since, from a green Martian. But Carter prevailed, ending Zad with a sword thrust even as he thought he was dying.

> Narrators can use Zad's stat block for any number of green Martian warriors who enjoy more time on stage than would a faceless minion, but who don't justify becoming a fully fleshed-out character.

THE ATMOSPHERE PLANT KEEPER

DEVOTED STEWARD OF ANCIENT SECRETS

"A strange, dried up mummy of a man came toward me."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
4	7	5

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
3	5	9

TALENTS

MASTER OF ANCIENT SECRETS (GRADE 4)

You are schooled in the ways of ancient machines and wonders of Barsoom, especially those left in your charge.

- **Circumstance:** When repairing or maintaining ancient machinery.
- **Effect:** Once per scene you may ask any one "yes or no" question about a piece of ancient technology. Tests to repair or comprehend ancient technology gain a 2d20 bonus and generate an additional Momentum if successful.

RUTHLESS REASON (GRADE 3)

At times you are called upon to do terrible things to protect the secrets and wonders in your care. When the time comes, you do not hesitate and are not moved by mercy or sentiment.

- **Circumstance:** When acting to protect the wonders and secrets in your care.
- **Effect:** You may always use Reason when acting directly to protect secrets or wonders in your care. You may also ignore the effects of the first affliction you suffer during a scene when acting in this fashion — you still suffer the affliction, you simply ignore its effects for the rest of the scene.

BACKGROUND

At any given time, the two most powerful beings on Barsoom are the keepers of the planet's ancient atmosphere plant. Only these two people know how to access the plant and operate it, having been taught the secrets of mentally manipulating sound and light to interact with the great machine.

These beings are trained in a line. When the elder of the two keepers dies, or takes their pilgrimage down the River Iss, the remaining keeper selects and teaches a replacement. Thus has the air of Barsoom sustained life for centuries longer than nature would have allowed had it run its own course. For half the year, one lives in the plant and keeps it functioning, while the other remains in the world seeing to less esoteric concerns, passing this duty between them.

John Carter met one of the keepers while escaping from the Warhoons and journeying on foot. The keeper on station greeted him with kindness and goodwill. However, unaccustomed to how people of Earth interact with Martian telepathy, he accidentally gave the Jasoomian the mental combination to the plant's door. That night, John Carter could read in his mind the keeper's intent to murder Carter in his sleep and preserve the secret. Carter waited for an opportunity, then escaped, using the same combination he had accidentally been given, and slipping out into the night. This knowledge would, ten years later, save the entire planet.

Though this description is of the atmosphere plant keeper John Carter met, narrators can use it for any keeper the player characters meet, or for any other technician or custodian ancient places and technologies of Barsoom.

Sarkoja

TREACHEROUS THARK ARISTOCRAT

"Sarkoja and the other women grunted angrily at this evidence of weakness."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
4	8	4

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
5	5	6

TALENTS

CUNNING LIAR (GRADE 3)

You are adept at lies and deception, often whispering in the ears of others to poison them against your enemies.

- **Circumstance:** When deceiving others.
- **Effect:** You may always use your Cunning in tests to lie, deceive, and detect others' deceptions. Your tests to lie and deceive, when successful, generate 2 bonus Momentum.

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

SOCIAL SABOTEUR (GRADE 4)

You are effective at plotting the downfall of others. Using pawns, allies, and even superiors you can usually bring about a terrible end to those who anger or displease you.

- **Circumstance:** When engineering the downfall of others.
- **Effect:** Once per session, pick an enemy or rival and a fate you wish to befall them such as "the jed must be disgraced" and make a **Cunning** + **Reason** (D1) test. If successful the narrator must reveal one hint or clue that will help you achieve your goal. This is vague but useful ("She has a secret lover" or "He is planning to escape"). Any Momentum earned may be spent by you normally, but may also be given to anyone who helps bring your goal to pass.

BACKGROUND

A woman of great influence among Lorquas Ptomel's Tharks, Sarkoja had the ear of many of his chiefs. She knew the law, and the levers and balances of power, and used both to secure a favorable position. More important still, she had a talent for sniffing out even the most hidden of secrets, and using the information to her advantage. For example, she discovered Gozava had secreted away an egg made with the man she loved, intending to raise it as her own child rather than with the more detached upbringing demanded by green Martian tradition. She turned Gozava over to the jeddak Tal Hajus, who tortured the poor woman to death.

When the Tharks met John Carter, Sarkoja's jealousy of Sola led her to act subtly, then overtly against the Virginian. Her hatred and aggression toward him increased tenfold when Dejah Thoris fell into the Tharks' hands and he refused to allow her mistreatment. This hatred culminated in her arranging for the Heliumite princess to be given into Tal Hajus's hands for the same torture Gozava had endured, and worse.

Upon Tars Tarkas unseating and replacing Tal Hajus as jeddak of the Tharks, his closest confederates discovered he was the father of Gozava's child, whom she had protected during those long hours of torture. Knowing that Sarkoja had been responsible for his beloved's suffering, he threatened her on the evening of his coronation. Sarkoja vanished from the city the very next morning. She is presumed to have taken the pilgrimage down the River Iss, but in any case was never seen again.

> If she did not take the pilgrimage, or during a series or campaign set among the Tharks prior to John Carter's arrival, Sarkoja makes for a natural recurring adversary. She is cunning, devious, and (at least initially) shielded from direct and physical retribution.

Lorquas Ptomel

MIGHTY THARK JED

"Lorquas Ptomel was too astute an old warrior to be caught upon the open plains."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
7	6	5
MIGHT	**PASSION**	**REASON**
7	4	4

TALENTS

DARING JED (GRADE 1)

You are one of your people's most fearsome and loyal leaders, capable of crushing enemies and commanding great respect.

- **Circumstance:** When dealing with matters of Thark leadership.
- **Effect:** You may always use your Daring to defend in challenges within the Thark hierarchy, be they challenges to your own position or tests involving the leadership and command of others.

DEADLY DUELIST (GRADE 3)

You are adept in one-on-one combat, often defeating warriors with many years more experience through a mix of skill and natural ability with decisive blows.

- **Circumstance:** When dueling or otherwise fighting one-on-one.
- **Effect:** When dueling or otherwise fighting an opponent one-on-one, gain a bonus d20 to attack actions. Your successful attacks do an additional 2 🎲 of damage.

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

BACKGROUND

The very model of the modern green Martian jed, Lorquas Ptomel is brutal in a fight, merciless in his judgment, unfailing in his loyalty, and steadfast in his virtue. Thanks to these traits, he led his horde to be one of the most powerful and feared within the Tharks, itself among the most renowned of the green Martian tribes.

His rise to jedhood among the Tharks was typical in its trajectory, but legendary in its speed. He fought his way into the service of a chief, and beat a rival chief in battle to earn his own command, all in his first two years as an adult. He became a jed less than one year later, using the butt of a spear to crush the skull of a jed who wronged one of his chiefs.

As a jed, he kept his horde out of the capital as often as possible, as he loathed his jeddak, whom he regarded as weak, dishonorable, and corrupt, and against whom he had a deep personal grudge. Instead, he kept his portion of the Tharks clean and battle-hungry by roaming the great ocean basins seeking war and plunder.

It was during his rule that John Carter first came to Mars, and it was his Tharks under Tars Tarkas who first encountered the Jasoomian soldier. Lorquas Ptomel was impressed by Carter's physical superiority and fighting prowess, and named him Dotar Sojat, a chief among his warriors.

An illustration of Lorquas Ptomel's absolute loyalty is found on the event of Taj Hajus's death. When Tars Tarkas challenged the corrupt jeddak, Lorquas Ptomel supported the claim. He helped convince the surrounding jeds to demand trial by combat, despite the fact that a win for Tars Tarkas would allow this underling to "leapfrog" and rule over him. Afterward, he continued to rule his portion of the Thark horde for many centuries as a staunch ally of John Carter and Tars Tarkas.

GOZAVA

DISHONORED GREEN MARTIAN MOTHER

"Had their defection from the traditions of the Tharks been discovered, both would have paid the penalty."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
4	5	7

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
5	7	5

TALENTS

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

LOVING PROTECTION (GRADE 4)

Your love and emotions are your shield and sword in times of trouble. Even as you often hide them from others, they push you on.

- **Circumstance:** When being bullied, tortured, or tormented.
- **Effect:** You gain a 3d20 bonus and may always use your Empathy to defend against attempts to intimidate or torment you.

BACKGROUND

Against strict green Martian tradition, Gozava fell in love with Tars Tarkas despite her belonging to Tal Hajus's retinue and Tars Tarkas being a lowly warrior. Against the power of tradition, and the threat of their jeddak's wrath, the two formed a romantic attachment beyond all but a few stories from among their warlike and unfeeling race.

Together, they produced an egg in secret and hid it beneath a great glass vessel in a ruined tower in ancient Thark. Their child would not become lost among the hundreds of other hatchlings in a Thark incubator, instead being checked on by one or both whenever they were able. They thus raised their offspring as their own until it was time for it to hatch. When it did, they slipped the newborn child in among the other children. This child was Sola, who they allowed to be raised among the other Thark children, left to the random and heavy-headed treatment all such children receive. However, knowing the look of their child, they were able to give her occasional attention and tenderness.

Ultimately, Sarkoja discovered Gozava's transgression, but not the name of her lover. She whispered word of it into the ear of Taj Hajus. The jeddak tortured Gozava for days in an attempt to make her give up the name of her love and co-conspirator. She died in agony, but never surrendered the information.

Although this is the only such tale among green Martians explicitly told in the ***John Carter of Mars*** books, Gozava demonstrates that despite the sometimes faceless and all-consuming traditions of Barsoomians, individuals exist who are willing to go against the grain and create stories worthy of telling for generations.

DOTAR AND SOJAT

BRAVE THARK WARRIORS

"I swung my fist squarely to his jaw and he went down like a felled ox."

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
6	4	3

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
7	4	4

TALENTS

DARING THARK WARRIOR (GRADE 2)

You are at your best when fighting for and among the horde.

- **Circumstance:** When engaged in battle alongside other Tharks.
- **Effect:** You can always use your Daring and deal an additional 1 🎲 of damage in physical combat when fighting alongside other Tharks.

FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.

- **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

BACKGROUND

John Carter's Martian name comes from those of the first two Martians he killed in single combat. Both were chiefs among the Tharks, and among the horde of Lorquas Ptomel. This means they were mighty and feared warriors, veterans of dozens if not hundreds of deadly combats.

Dotar attacked John Carter when the Jasoomian was first brought to the court of Lorquas Ptomel. He grabbed and shook the newcomer in a manner he was never permitted to explain. Carter punched him square in the jaw, intending to knock him flat but instead killing him outright.

Sojat was among the chiefs in attendance when the captured Dejah Thoris was brought to Lorquas Ptomel after her capture in battle. When he struck the helpless captive, Carter leapt upon him and stabbed him to death in a brief but vicious struggle.

Dotar and Sojat are examples of the chiefs of the Tharks and other green Martian hordes. Narrators can use their stat block any time such a character is needed but doesn't demand a fully customized treatment.

UPDATES TO EXISTING CHARACTERS

The following section details changes and updates to existing characters during the Dotar Sojat era. Some of these changes are mechanical, while others involve a character's particular situation during this era. In many cases, these changes only represent a character at the start of the era or shortly before. In others, it depicts the character up until a significant event changes them.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

More so than any other era, the Dotar Sojat era encourages narrators and players to create alternate versions of existing characters. Without existing tales to structure characters and events, things are wide open. This is especially true if the players intend to take the role of John Carter and other important characters or if they intend to play younger versions of veteran characters in adventures set years earlier.

In such cases, players and narrators should take a good look at the existing statistics for the characters they seek to revise and recreate. There is ample room to tweak and adjust various characters, but the core elements of their personalities and capabilities should remain. For example, a John Carter who isn't a fighting Virginian with an aptitude for swordplay and making allies, but who gets frustrated by romance and navigating Barsoomian customs, isn't really John Carter. Likewise Tars Tarkas could be a different version of the ruthless but capable Thark chieftain we first meet, but without that spark of tragedy and potential for emotional growth, it's not really the four-limbed warrior so beloved by Burroughs and his readers.

None of the above considerations mean narrators and players can't decide to tell the rollicking adventures of modern army veteran Joan Carter and her planet-spanning romance with Thuvia, Banth Mistress and Jeddara of Ptarth, or some other robust departure from canon — just be aware of how such changes can alter events and characters.

DEJAH THORIS

Dejah is largely unchanged. The only difference is that she and John Carter bring out the best in each other in many ways, and narrators portraying Dejah before she meets Carter should reduce her Passion by 1.

GAHAN OF GATHOL

Though not mentioned in the first two eras covered by John Carter of Mars, it is reasonable to assume a younger version of Gahan either rules Gathol as jeddak or serves under his father or other relative who rules the kingdom instead. A younger Gahan would be much the same, though his Cunning would be reduced by 1 to reflect his relative inexperience.

HOR VASTUS

Though not seen in the stories of the era, Hor Vastus logically is a younger officer in Helium's navy and a friend to Dejah Thoris. During this period his statistics are largely unchanged, though his Reason is reduced by 1 to reflect slightly less experience as a tactician and leader.

JOHN CARTER

Carter is likewise generally unchanged. However, like his beloved Dejah, the war-weary Carter's Passion is reduced by 1 before he meets her. Also, should anyone encounter Carter during his time on Earth, his Might would be reduced to 6 while on his home planet and he loses access to his Leaps and Bounds and Earthborn Strength talents.

KANTOS KAN

Kantos Kan remains unchanged during the era, though if encountered as a fledgling officer before the era he has his Reason reduced by 1.

MORS KAJAK AND TARDOS MORS

Both these great leaders are unchanged. If encountered centuries ago in their youth they would reduce their Reason by 1 and increase their Daring by 1, but that is well before the current era.

SOLA

Sola flourishes through her friendship with Carter and Dejah Thoris. Growing closer to her father also strengthens her resolve. Before she becomes closer to these characters, her Passion and Daring are reduced by 1.

SALENSUS OLL

This tyrant is no less terrible and cruel during this era. If encountered early in his reign, he would be less cagey and more reckless, reducing his Cunning by 1 but increasing his Daring by 1.

TARS TARKAS

Before his friendship with John Carter and experiencing the love of his daughter, Sola, Tars suffers the same cold-heartedness as his fellow Tharks. During this period his Empathy is reduced by 1 and he loses the True Friendship talent until he forms it with Carter.

THUVAN DIHN

Prior to the loss of his daughter, Thuvan Dihn was somewhat happier, bolder, and yet less introspective. This would be his state during the Dotar Sojat era and to reflect this his Daring would be increased by 1 and his Reason reduced by 1.

THUVIA

Thuvia, during the Dotar Sojat period, is the beloved daughter of Ptarth, though one who felt inclined to travel the River Iss shortly after the era ends. This leads to her eventual capture and enslavement by the Therns, a state she remains in until she meets Carter during the Prince of Helium era. Thuvia prior to her enslavement has her Might reduced by 1. She also likely lacks the Banth Mastery talent, having no reason to yet hone this innate ability. However, if adventures feature the princess and banths during this period, she may show signs of this ability, and she retains her empathy with these creatures in any event.

XODAR

Prior to meeting and befriending Carter, Dator Xodar is arrogant, self-assured, and confident the First Born are superior to all others. This attitude reduces his Empathy by 1. This is in effect throughout the era, changing only when he meets and befriends Carter when they are both imprisoned by Issus during the Prince of Helium era.

THE UNKNOWN

Some characters are not yet born or have not yet arrived on Barsoom — or both in the case of World War I veteran Ulysses Paxton. These characters will not appear during this era. They include:

- Carthoris
- Ulysses Paxton
- Tara
- Llana of Gathol

THE UNCHANGED

A few characters won't change noticeably during this era, being established and largely static in their methods and capabilities. Most notable among these is the goddess Issus, who is so ancient a few years will do nothing to alter her personality or attributes. The characters who are unchanged from their portrayal in the core book are:

- Matai Shang
- Hin Abtol
- Issus

CHARACTERS FROM FUTURE ERA BOOKS

Many of the characters presented in the Prince of Helium and Jeddak of Jeddaks era books would also be active during this period, if generally unknown to Carter and his allies. There are exceptions, mostly offspring of characters active during this era. However, due to the length of the average Martian lifespan even many "young" characters could be around during the Dotar Sojat era.

Narrators with access to the other era books can largely use the statistics in those books as presented. However, they should ask themselves two questions about those characters and, if necessary, make adjustments to their abilities.

The first question is whether the characters gained anything during the era where they are featured that reflects in their statistics. For example, a former adversary or rival who is reformed by love or friendship would lack talents relating to being a beloved friend or lover. They might also lack some Empathy or Passion, reducing one or both of those attributes. Usually a reduction of a single attribute by 1 is sufficient to reflect this — characters on Barsoom are slow to change their natures and abilities significantly.

The second question reflects the opposite concern: did the characters lose anything during the era when they are featured that reflects in their statistics? A fallen hero or former leader or warrior might be encountered in an earlier era in their former life. Likewise, a villain who turned bad due to later circumstances could be a much more sympathetic character during the Dotar Sojat era. Like before, a small change of a few attribute points, an additional talent, or some other relatively minor alteration is usually sufficient to portray this earlier version of the character.

These two questions, once they are answered and any changes are applied, should provide narrators with earlier versions of later characters for use in their campaigns. With a few minor adjustments, it's usually easy enough to turn a mad jeddak into an equally mad but less experienced prince or a brave veteran soldier into a heroic but inexperienced rookie.

UNKNOWN HISTORIES

In some cases the answers to questions about a character's history are unknown, leaving it to the narrator to use their best judgment. This can be daunting but also exciting; imagine encountering a great villain of the later stories before they turned evil, or a youth in need of confidence and inspiration before developing into the hero they one day become. The only downside to this approach is that narrators running campaigns that hew close to canonical Barsoom will need to make sure these earlier versions of the characters still match up with the novels. This can be potentially frustrating for some players, especially those who take it upon themselves to work to change these characters' fates.

OPTIONAL RULE:
AGING

Martians don't age as humans do. Even the oldest of them tend to keep much of their vigor and health until death – consider an ancient crone like Issus, who was surprisingly spry for her incredibly advanced years. However, experiencing centuries of life does have an inevitable impact. Youth is a time of reckless adventure and passion, while age brings wisdom and experience. These changes are reflected in some of the updates for the older established characters of the Dotar Sojat era — showing how once they were brash young heroes and villains like Carter, Dejah, Tars, and most player heroes.

It is unlikely a campaign will last the centuries required for age to take effect on a character, though with frequent time jumps or dynastic-style play it is possible a young hero may eventually become an old veteran of Barsoom's many battles and crises. Should this occur, the aging hero may trade a point of Daring, Might, or Passion for Cunning, Empathy, or Reason. Likewise, adventures set in the youth of an older character may do the reverse: raising Daring, Might, or Passion in exchange for lowering Cunning, Empathy, or Reason. This change as a character ages reflects the tendencies and strengths of youthful heroics versus those of veteran adventurers.

MYSTERIES OF BARSOOM

> *During the early years of the discovery of this ray many strange accidents occurred before the Martians learned to measure and control the wonderful power they had found. In one instance, some nine hundred years before, the first great battle ship to be built with eighth ray reservoirs was stored with too great a quantity of the rays and she had sailed up from Helium with five hundred officers and men, never to return.*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

Of all the eras available for play in ***John Carter of Mars***, Dotar Sojat is the most filled with mystery. In later ages, heroes and adventurers face many things strange and unknown, but which are largely understood by the end of the story.

Not so in Dotar Sojat. At the end of *A Princess of Mars*, John Carter has just begun to understand the very surface of Martian geography, telepathy, customs, traditions, and technology. He returns to Earth after ten years on Barsoom, still mostly a neophyte.

Further, the Dotar Sojat era includes all the sweeping eons *before* John Carter's arrival. The centuries of war between the red cities and green hordes is a part of it. The images portraying gardens, beauty, a more civilized time, and a forgotten race portray a part of it. Every year and day and decade between the two is a part of it.

Many of the considerations listed in the "Secrets of Barsoom" chapter of the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rules are unknown to the general population during this era. Some impacts of these secrets create mysteries of their own, as they interact with the uninformed masses occupying the Red Planet.

What follows in this chapter is a collection of details, ideas, and inspirations for how to treat the technologies and locations of Barsoom in the ways that best bring forward the unique strengths of adventures in the Dotar Sojat era. This includes some information about items, powers, and locations seen "on screen" during *A Princess of Mars*, but also some new wonders that could have existed during, or before, John Carter's early adventures on Barsoom.

STRANGE TECHNOLOGY

Martians occupy a planet with a severely depleted population, which was once rich and full of life and treasure. The abundance of abandoned wealth makes ordinary possessions meaningless, even though the technologies that drive them are core to the tale. It would be difficult to imagine Martian adventures without the red airships, the green rifles, and other advances from more exotic races.

But beyond the everyday tools, wondrous as they may be, are hints of deeper and more advanced technologies lost after centuries of conflict and chaos. The atmosphere plant is one of the greatest, but images and stories tell of many others. Whether these appear as forgotten wonders unearthed in the late Dotar Sojat era, or as part of life in stories set far in the past, there is plenty of room for new and mysterious devices.

NEW POWERS

As John Carter learned to understand and deal with the new technologies of Barsoom, he also became acquainted with the telepathy and other powers of the people of that planet. Though they may have been mistaken for magic by other individuals—or were actually magic in other tales—all had a rational and scientific explanation.

There is no reason to believe that the powers John Carter encountered in *A Princess of Mars* were the full complement of weird and wondrous abilities possessed by the men, women, and beasts of Barsoom. This is especially true of the earlier ages of the Dotar Sojat era. Perhaps Martian civilization began to dwindle not because of environmental catastrophe, but because of vital powers becoming lost.

MYSTERIOUS PLACES

Similarly, the landscapes of the planet remain mysterious during the Dotar Sojat era. It's no accident that during this first introduction of Barsoom and its environs John Carter spent most of his time on his feet. It kept the scale of discovery manageable, and left plenty of room for secrets to later be revealed.

Many of these undisclosed locations get discovered in detail during later books in the series, and wide swaths of land remain unmapped. This isn't even considering how the lands might have changed in the long, slow time between the drying of the oceans and the end of the Dotar Sojat era.

STRANGE TECHNOLOGY

During the Dotar Sojat era, technologies can be divided into two groups: workaday tools, and wondrous sciences.

The workaday tools may seem extraordinary to outside eyes, such as rifles with an accuracy beyond two miles, and salves that can turn a mortal wound into a mere inconvenience. However, these are simple and familiar tools to the Martians who use them. Imagine how a visitor from Victorian England or the American Old West would view your smartphone, and you'll have a perfect understanding of this. To you it's a simple tool you use every day, but to them it would seem like inexplicable magic.

Wondrous science is still science, but new to Martian society and often driven by understanding beyond the ken of most human beings. Such phenomena can appear to be magical, but once their workings are understood they become as normal as any other mundane device. Most Martians of the Dotar Sojat era are deeply suspicious of new sciences, and given to assume ill intent on the part of those who would use them.

Keep in mind, too, that the workaday tools of one epoch of this era could seem as wondrous science to another. Just as the rifles of the green Martians amazed John Carter with their range and accuracy, what might a day-to-day fact of life from the height of Martian civilization seem like to one from more barbaric and fallen times?

NEW EQUIPMENT

On the following pages are examples of new technologies that could be introduced into the Dotar Sojat era. None make an appearance in *A Princess of Mars*, but all are consistent with the themes and action of adventures in this period. They might be new inventions of red Martian scientists, or they could be recently rediscovered technologies long forgotten in the planet's slow decline. Narrators setting campaigns centuries before John Carter's arrival might use them to differentiate that period from the time in later years of the era.

When appropriate, experience costs for purchasing an item as core equipment are provided. Narrators and players should remember that characters still need access to equipment before they can make it core equipment for a player hero. Simply paying experience for a stun ray or protective robe isn't enough; it must be found, purchased, given, or otherwise acquired. In the case of some equipment, this may be difficult if not impossible and narrators may veto the acquisition of certain core equipment at their discretion.

FACE CRYSTAL

An application of splitting visible light with the facsimile communication used to transmit the images of criminals between red Martian cities, this crystal is a cube about the size of a closed fist. Once a facsimile image is transmitted into the crystal, it holds a perfect three-dimensional image of the subject until the crystal breaks, or is given a new image.

The means for making these devices is lost to time, but occasionally one will still be found in the abandoned buildings of Martian cities. Mostly, they are used by ardent lovers as a token of affection or reminder of a lover far distant or recently gone. Sometimes, guilds of assassins use them to identify their next target. Either way, they are prized possessions among their owners, and have been used as a gift to seal alliances between previously hostile cities or hordes.

Face crystals are delicate by the standards of Barsoomian people and equipment, and can be broken with the force of a drop or fall. To break the image of a person's loved one's face held in such a crystal is an act of offense capable of starting a blood feud that lasts multiple generations.

FACE CRYSTALS IN GAMES

Face crystals don't have direct mechanical effects, but are useful both for roleplaying purposes and to enable plots in adventures by identifying important characters or illustrating connections between the possessor of a face crystal and their subject. Face crystals cannot be manufactured, only scavenged from ancient ruins or purchased from collectors. As a sentimental piece of core equipment, it costs 5xp.

Narrators may grant a bonus d20 in situations where the image contained in a face crystal is particularly useful to an action. The most common use of this is likely in recovering Trauma or Madness afflictions — looking at a loved one's face and remembering them may help ease mental and emotional damage.

Zodangan Stun Ray

Found in pistol and rifle versions, these guns contain a reservoir containing the eighth ray, and a lens to direct it. When aimed at a living being and activated, it wraps the force of the ray around the target's diaphragm and squeezes for as long as the trigger is depressed. Any given stun ray can target only one creature at a time, and loses its hold immediately if directed at a new space while in action.

The target creature, who cannot breathe, soon loses consciousness for easy capture and interrogation. The ray itself does little harm, unless the victim falls in a way that causes damage. There has been some experimentation to reduce the maximum pressure of the ray for use as a binding, or to increase the maximum pressure to break ribs and crush organs.

Zodangan stun rays are relatively rare, having been developed only recently and under circumstances which rule out its rapid, widespread appeal. However, they are fiercely coveted by the Zodangans' green Martian rivals. With that species' love of torture, the ability to capture an enemy without killing them has obvious appeal.

STUN RAYS IN GAMES

Zodangan stun rays work differently than normal weapons. The attacker makes an attack roll with the weapon as normal, but the attack does not deal normal damage. Instead the defender must make an Average (D1) **Might + Daring** test or immediately black out. Each Momentum spent raises the difficulty of this test by 1.

If the optional rules for blacking out are used (see ***John Carter of Mars***, *Chapter 4: Adventuring in Barsoom*), the use of stun rays is a great justification for how narrators can compel a blackout in a character. In fact, narrators wishing to limit the use of those rules might enact such limits when certain attacks, such as stun ray blasts, are involved. As core equipment these weapons cost 15xp, being very useful and unusual.

Heart Burrower

There was a time after the oceans began to recede but before Martian civilization truly collapsed when the preservation of life became a high priority. Violence resurged, and the most advanced scientific theories were put into practice to prevent assaults from becoming murders, and attempted assassinations being successful.

A heart burrower was a collection of inert cells the size of a closed red Martian fist. When inserted into a wound, it would slither into the position of the nearest severely damaged organ. As Martian marksmanship meant this was very often the heart, it soon gained this nickname despite being useful throughout the body.

Within seconds of reaching its destination, a heart burrower would absorb the tissues of the damaged organ and reconstruct itself to become a healthy version of that same body part. Most recipients of a heart burrower transplant reported returning to perfect health, though they also admitted it hurt far more than the initial injury.

During the earlier ages of the Dotar Sojat era, heart burrowers were a common but not inexhaustible resource. As the middle years of war and decay took hold, those that were still extant lay forgotten in empty chambers. They are unknown and unremembered by the time of *A Princess of Mars*. If, however, one were to find mention of them along with a partial formula, the means for their recreation is within the ability of some red Martian scientists.

HEART BURROWERS IN GAMES

A heart burrower must be successfully inserted into a wound using an Average (D1) test, usually **Reason + Cunning**. After insertion it removes all Injury stress immediately and one Wounds affliction per turn until they are all healed. This process is painful and can be traumatic and disorienting, dealing 1 🎲 of damage with the Psychic quality to the patient's Confusion stress track, but these devices can revive even a mortally injured patient in minutes.

Heart burrowers and similar medical wonders cannot be purchased normally but must be acquired through exploration or recreated by scientists who have studied their workings.

PAIRED SMOKERS

By combining methods for the manufacture of incendiary devices with the radio broadcast technologies Martians mostly ignored, some Barsoomians have created a method for coordinating military and clandestine actions between separate teams at a distance.

Each smoker is about the size and shape of a sword's hilt, with a button where the blade would be. They come in pairs, which are irreversibly linked. When one smoker's button is depressed, the other emits a wisp of warm, yellow smoke. This allows the owners to communicate simple, one-time messages across vast distances.

For example, two arms of a strike force could approach a city from different directions, depressing their buttons to let the other team know when they are in position. This allows for split-second timing of an assault from multiple directions. Even if one were captured, somebody seeing the smoker they hold begin to smoke would only know that a signal had been sent, with no clue to its meaning.

Paired smokers spend their supply of incendiaries after one use. For this reason, strike teams on a complex mission might carry multiple pairs of smokers to communicate as various stages are completed.

PAIRED SMOKERS IN GAMES

Smokers don't have mechanical effects, but allow for coordinated strikes and interesting roleplaying opportunities if used. These are generally employed by spies and soldiers on operations, making them military equipment: easily acquired by such individuals, but uncommon in civilian circles. As a piece of core equipment, a regular supply of paired smokers costs 5xp.

SUBMERSIBLE SNORKEL

In centuries past, before Barsoom's oceans began to dry and long before open warfare was the default state of the world, Martians used to swim for sport. A submersible snorkel is a simple tube with holes in the center and at both ends. The users place the center holes in their mouths, then breathe normally.

Reservoirs of the ninth ray convert the water immediately to its constituent gases, providing pure oxygen and releasing the waste hydrogen into the surrounding water. This device allowed Martians to explore the planet's seas, lakes, and oceans to whatever depths their bodies could endure. A typical submersible snorkel has a large enough ninth ray supply to last for several weeks of continuous diving, making it inexhaustible for most purposes.

Though water is rare in later parts of the Dotar Sojat era, in the right circumstances a submersible snorkel could allow an unanticipated covert approach. Applied creatively, it might protect a hero from hazards like noxious gas or poisonous fumes.

Submersible snorkels are surprisingly common in the abandoned cities of Barsoom. Most have forgotten their original use and ignore them, thinking them just another example of art made by a people whose time has come and gone.

SUBMERSIBLE SNORKELS IN GAMES

Submersible Snorkels provide breathable air for days or weeks of underwater operation. The snorkels are not meant to be used above ground, though they could provide some protection against harmful gases — granting a bonus d20 to resist such effects. They are not widely used or sold today, but can be salvaged in ancient cities or scavenged from those who sell or collect curios from Barsoomian history. They cost 5xp as core equipment.

WARRIOR'S ROBE

At the height of Martian civilization, open warfare and conflict were far rarer. It was a gentler time, and overt violence was considered gauche. That did not mean Martians forsook their namesake god, but rather that the violence was committed under cover of darkness, and through deniable channels.

To protect important personages from assassination, the warrior's robe was invented. It's a cape-like garment, usually of bright colors in the livery of the owner's city or family. Made from the silk of now-extinct giant cave spiders, it is as strong as bronze but as flexible as normal cloth. Though they offer no protection from a radium bullet, these garments will surely turn aside an assassin's blade long enough for the wearer to react. They are light, and fashionable, and were a symbol of status during their heyday. After all, only the most important of human beings must fear assassination.

Warrior's robes, giant cave spiders, and much of the art of weaving these precious garments were forgotten long before John Carter arrived on Barsoom. However, given their durability, it is possible some still exist. Perhaps there are many, strewn on the floors of green Martian nests and gathering dust in the outskirts of red cities, waiting for somebody to remember them.

WARRIOR'S ROBES IN GAMES

Warrior's robes negate the Sharp quality of a weapon, treating it instead as if it has no quality. Warriors robes can be found in ruins and lost cities. If purchased as core equipment, they cost 10xp.

MURDER SPEAKER

Death and killing are commonplace in every culture of Barsoom, but murder outside of specifically sanctioned assassination is universally considered an abomination. Murderers are immediately executed, or left to the tender mercies of the mightiest friend or relation of the victim. The trouble with the murdered, though, is they are not able to speak and identify their killers.

This was even more true in the days just after the seas began to dry, before warfare was more common and when Martians mourned death more like their Earthly counterparts.

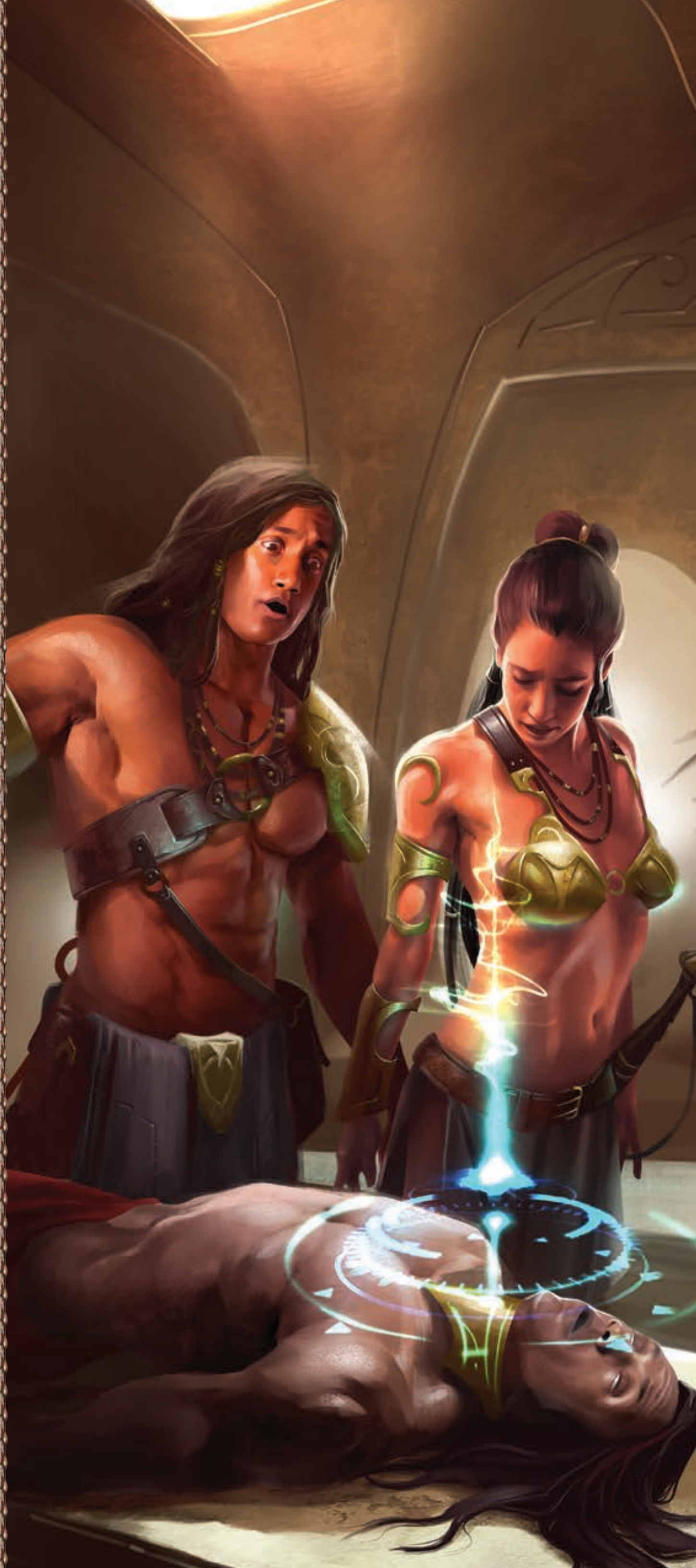
The murder speaker was the invention of Phardakar Ixus, who fulfilled a role in the ancient city of Hallas similar to that of an investigative policeman on Jasoom. Based on the well-known fact that the body freezes in death, Phardakar Ixus realized the muscle tension in a voice box could record the final few words (or even thoughts) of a murder victim.

The speaker, which resembles a thick metal collar, goes around the neck of the deceased. When activated, it reads the flexion of the tissues in the throat and translates them into words. If investigators are lucky those final words will be the name of the person responsible for the victim's death.

MURDER SPEAKERS IN GAMES

Using a murder speaker requires a Challenging (D2) **Reason + Empathy** test. Success allows the user to discover the final words of a corpse, no more than five words total. Additional words can be revealed for 1 Momentum per additional 2 words. The character's rough emotional state at death is also determined through these words, such as whether they were in great pain, surprised, or even unaware of the attack which killed them.

The corpse's vocal cords must be intact — damage to that part of the body raises the difficulty or renders the device unusable at the narrator's discretion. Murder speakers are lost technology and largely viewed as a curiosity or novelty by most modern Barsoomians, who rely on trained psychologists who can coax emotions and information from the recently dead (see *New Powers*, Necropathy). A murder speaker would cost 10xp as core equipment.



Technology's Purpose

On Barsoom, no technology exists for its own sake. Burroughs never inserted a device that wasn't also a plot device. He didn't just think of a gizmo that would be interesting, or look cool "on screen," then put it in the hands of a Barsoomian adventurer. Instead he saw a hole in the narrative he was constructing, then filled it with a custom-designed invention based (often loosely) on existing science.

Technologies on Barsoom fulfill narrative purposes before all else. They are just as important a part of the story as the characters, conflicts, settings, and motivations. For adventures within the Dotar Sojat era especially, they are deeply intertwined with the identities of the races using them.

When inserting new or highlighting existing inventions in your Dotar Sojat era campaign, you need to decide on the why, the how, and the who of any technology in an adventure, a campaign, or the world. Its place and purpose in your narrative will give it the narrative power of their existing counterparts.

Why Should it Exist?

What purpose will the new technology serve in the story you want to tell? Where will it fit, and what will it allow the heroes to do? *Why they were invented* serves a secondary purpose to this, which you don't necessarily need to explore unless that story impacts the tale you want to tell (or is a story you want to tell on its own). Put simply: what do you want the technology to accomplish? And what is unique about the technology that makes it so existing devices won't serve that purpose?

One aspect this question particularly impacts is the size of the technology. Consider two examples from the "on-screen" technologies of *A Princess of Mars*. The rifles of the green Martians were meant to be simple tools, allowing characters to perform a specific act. They were thus portable. On the other end of the spectrum was the atmosphere plant. It wasn't a tool for the characters so much as a tool for the narrator: a plot device. It was far from portable, a contraption the size of a building, and a large building at that.

How Does it Function?

This can be based on whatever tenuous pseudo-science the narrator sees fit (see below), but it can't just be "Science!". Left to that explanation, these items are little better than the magic items looted from crypts in other roleplaying games. Instead, explore what forces and concepts make the technology possible. The possibility can certainly be razor-thin, and even based on assumptions we in the 21st century know to be false, but having that touchstone to a certain reality is vital to the tone of Dotar Sojat era play.

Whatever science, science fantasy, or pseudoscience a given technology relies on, also ask how the device *is made to function*, meaning, how does a character activate it? If you want the *effects* of the technology to be most important, a simple button or trigger will suffice. But if the *device itself* should be center-stage, make it more difficult to operate. You can even make its means of operation a mystery of its own, the subject of a quest or conundrum for your adventurers to unlock before they can benefit from the new technology.

Who Possesses it?

This is especially important in the Dotar Sojat era, during which the red and green Martians were at war. The red Martians, and only the red Martians, possessed airships. Only green Martians used long-range radium rifles. Who commands specific technologies marked a culture as much as its people's size, form, and organization. Similarly, consider how possession of a new technology might impact and change a city, horde, or race, and how it might alter the balance of power between them.

This is also the time to think about how your player characters' possession of the technology might impact your campaign as a whole. If you give them too much power too quickly, you could render many future trials trivial. On the other hand, you might construct a series of adventures in which possessing a strange, new tool of science is essential to success. There's no right or wrong answer here, so long as you anticipate and consider the possibilities while you are designing the technologies you want to add.

OF RATIONALITY AND INNOVATION

In the pulp fantasy of ***John Carter of Mars***, "magic" is an insufficient explanation for anything. This is not the fantasy of witches, dragons, wizards, and dungeons. Plenty of swords exist in the deserts and cities of the Red Planet, but there is no sorcery.

This doesn't mean fantastic, or even fantastical-seeming devices, occurrences, and technologies have no place in Barsoom. After all, this is a world where architecture rises over a mile above the ground, airships travel at tremendous speeds while expending no fuel, and telescopes can observe individual action on other planets. And all of this is possible because a single building operated by two human beings manipulates the planet's entire atmosphere to keep it breathable.

Still, none of these wonders come from anything but the cold, rational application of science. Everything works based on what was understood about the universe at the time of Burroughs' writing.

One could say Burroughs reverse-engineered Clarke's Third Law ("Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.") long before Arthur C. Clarke learned to hold a pen. Instead of blithely saying "Science!" and doing what he wished, he infused the technologies John Carter encountered with clear, well-explained thoughts that felt like science.

Example: *Burroughs wanted airships that worked largely like magic carpets from stories like the Arabian Nights. But magic and genies would not do. Instead, he thought about what he knew of the edges of human science during his decades. Specifically, he looked at what we knew about the nature of light. He imagined that our known colors of the visible spectrum included two that were invisible to the eyes of earthlings. His "eighth ray" was responsible for propelling light across the gulfs of space, driving it from the sun to the planets, and outward from the planets as they shone in the heavens. His Martians learned to trap this ray to make their airships buoyant, and to direct it so the airships could move at speeds unlike anything available at the time on Earth. Astonishing as it may have been to witness battleship-sized dreadnaughts floating in the air like balloons, readers understood how it was made possible and knew that Earth could theoretically accomplish the same feats of engineering given time.*

THE SPIRIT OF RATIONAL WONDERMENT

When inventing your own technologies for Dotar Sojat era adventures, one approach to keep them congruent with this spirit of rational wonderment is to start with the three questions asked above. After you've answered them, move on to finding a suitable scientific rationale for it using technology and scientific understanding. Look to the Barsoom novels for inspiration, or Jules Verne's technologies, or even Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. All three put forward ideas, inventions, and technologies we know are impossible today, but which were logically sound given the assumptions of Burroughs's time.

Example: *A narrator could begin with the idea of a stun weapon, which the red Martians want to use so they can capture enemies for interrogation instead of killing them outright. What technologies or sciences might support such a device? After briefly flirting with modern stun guns, the narrator would reject that line because electricity is virtually unknown on Barsoom. Instead, the narrator remembers the propulsive properties of the eighth ray. He decides that red scientists have discovered a new way to direct the eighth ray to compress the chest of a human being until they lose consciousness. The result is a new technology for the age complete with scientific explanation.*

PERSONAL APPEAL

Another approach is to start with a scientific or technological idea the narrator finds interesting, then imagine an application of that idea that answers all the questions we've asked so far about new Barsoom technologies. This can sometimes make it harder to insert the invention into your game with as much significance and sense of place as with the other method, but often leads to technologies you personally find more appealing. And if you're more passionate about an element of your campaign, so too will your players be.

Example: *A narrator could have recently read a book about the codebreakers at Bletchley Park and started thinking about how that might be applied to warfare on Barsoom. The red Martians had the capacity for broadcasting messages over long distances, but no means of keeping those broadcasts secret. Thus, radio communication was not part of Martian warfare. However, cryptography was certainly possible, especially in light of how the vault door for the atmosphere plant functioned.*

The result is the Harmonic Secret Keeper, which though more of a technique than a device is used along with existing technology as a way of keeping battlefield secrets out of the hands of the enemy. It consists of playing *half* of a song and broadcasting it over the radio transmitters. Those intended to hear it will have been taught the other half, with the pair combining to give all the necessary information.

NEW POWERS

The ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook presents the narrator and players with all the strange powers that are featured in the Barsoom novels. However, that does not mean those impressive and bizarre abilities are the end of appropriate arcane and unusual abilities that might be found in a campaign. The worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs and his pulp fiction contemporaries were often filled with individuals, creatures, and groups that possessed strange abilities. Some pulp heroes became famous for their powers, such as the Shadow's ability to "cloud men's minds" or The Avenger's ability to mold his flesh. While such abilities are not strictly within canonical Barsoom, remember that Burroughs himself never balked at adding new strange abilities and secret powers to his stories if he thought they would make a story or plot more interesting. Narrators can do the same, giving characters strange powers that enable new plots and fuel adventures. Player heroes might even develop bizarre abilities, either natural extensions of existing traits such as Barsoomian telepathy or Earthborn strength, or wholly new and strange powers.

BRIEF WARNINGS

The Barsoom tales are largely rationalist. Things have a reason for why they exist and an explanation for how they operate. These reasons and explanations may seem quaint or fantastical by today's standards, but they are important to maintaining the feel of the setting. The answer to the "why?" and "how?" of some strange phenomena is never "a wizard did it" — unless that wizard is actually an eccentric scientist taking some fringe scientific theory and stretching it to the edge of possibility. But in the end, Burroughsian "magic" always has some rational if mind-bending explanation behind it.

Narrators should keep this in mind when designing their own powers and approving those made by players. Coming up with implausible explanations for a character's ability to shoot flames from their eyes or transform into a beast might seem unnecessary, but in truth it keeps Barsoom grounded firmly on the side of science fiction fantasy and not simply fantasy. Without these reasons and rationalizations, the setting starts to feel subtly "off," which can affect the enjoyment of players and narrators who expect to be playing in a Burroughsian-style science fiction fantasy setting.

To assist with this idea, all the powers here will come with some possible explanations for their source and method of operation. These are mostly of the 20th century pulp variety, so they may not always match up perfectly with modern science, but then neither do eighth ray powered airships and radium guns. These are just some possible explanations, and narrators and players are encouraged to invent their own.

Also, narrators should remember that adding these powers opens things up in potentially interesting but also disruptive ways. Once the player heroes encounter a character with Telekinesis, Beast Form, or some other fantastic power, they are aware the setting has those abilities and that genie cannot be put back in the bottle. Some players will desire those powers for their own characters, while others may begin to view other parts of the setting as less exciting. This doesn't mean narrators shouldn't use the powers provided to make a telekinetic Orovar mystic to menace their heroes or run their "Werewolves of Mars" adventure featuring lycanthropic marauders from Cluros — they should just realize that such developments change things in their games.

ADRENALINE SURGE

The character has such control of their body that they can cause their adrenaline to surge on command and to incredible levels. This gives the character a massive boost to their physical power, though it causes stress and exhaustion after the surge wears off.

This power is sometimes present in beasts, usually those that have been altered by science. Truly nefarious scientists may grant this power to beasts but alter it so only they may trigger or control it, creating beasts that seem docile or controlled until they suddenly become enraged, agitated, and exceptionally dangerous.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- The character is a mutant possessing an extra gland that allows for the boosting and control of adrenaline production and use.
- Meditation and other methods grant the character exceptional control of their bodily functions.

TALENT

ADRENALINE SURGE (GRADE 3)

- **Circumstance:** Before making a Might test or entering a physical conflict.
- **Effect:** You receive an immediate 2d20 bonus to all Might tests and deals an additional 1 🎲 of damage on attacks that rely on physical strength, such as melee attacks and thrown weapons. You may also use your Might for all such attacks. This effect lasts until the end of the scene, after which you feel drained and exhausted. In the next scene, you immediately suffer 1 stress to each of your stress tracks to represent this exhaustion and cannot use this power for that scene.

BEAST FORM

Classic myths and legends are filled with stories of humans who can take the forms of beasts. While only stories, it is possible the ability to self-mutate or transform exists as a closely guarded secret. By altering one's tissues, bones, and muscle, a human could turn themselves into a deadly bestial shape.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Psychic manipulation of the physical form taken to superhuman extremes.
- A virus controlled by the infected's will.
- A mutation in the character's genetics that allows them to regress into a more primitive form.

TALENT

BEAST FORM (GRADE 5)

- **Circumstance:** Transforming into another form.
- **Effect:** By making a **Might + Passion** (D2) test, you can assume a bestial form much like the mythical werewolf or other creatures of legend. In this form, you adjust your attributes up and down as desired, taking attributes from one to add to another. Thus you might reduce your Reason by 2 and raise your Might by 2 while in this altered state.

  In addition, you can spend 2 Momentum to temporarily increase an attribute by 1 until you revert back to your natural form.

  While in your chosen beast form, you have natural weapons that deal 2 🎲 of damage. You also gain any sensory abilities, such as night vision or enhanced scent, that your beast form has.

  You retain your from until you choose to revert or you black out. You cannot hugely alter your mass in beast form, you must appear as roughly the same size as your natural form.

CLOUD MINDS

Using advanced psychic techniques, those who possess this power can make themselves seem to disappear from sight. They are not invisible to visual recording devices, but living minds cannot (or refuse to) perceive them. The user can still talk and make noise, which can be used to startle or intimidate the unaware. Exceptionally perceptive and strong-willed individuals can resist this effect, detecting the user.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Expansion of telepathic communication to project "blank spots" in a target's awareness.
- Creating a psychic "cloud" that living beings naturally ignore, causing them to overlook anyone within this area.
- Using mental control to "edit" an individual out of sensory awareness.

TALENT

CLOUD MINDS (GRADE 5)

- **Circumstance:** When attempting to mask your presence from living beings.
- **Effect:** You make a **Cunning + Reason** (D1) test. Success means all minion-class characters cannot see you and ignore your presence unless you make an effort to be heard. All other characters may only see you if they succeed in a **Cunning + Empathy** (D1) test. You may increase the difficulty of the test to be seen by spending 2 Momentum per +1 difficulty to a maximum of (D5). This effect lasts until you choose to end it or you directly attack a character.

  While invisible you are 2 steps more difficult to hit, and receive a bonus 1d20 to startle, intimidate, or misdirect any who cannot see you while this power is in effect.

Esoteric Martial Arts

Barsoomian combat arts are advanced, but they largely deal with armed combat using a small number of weapons. However, in various parts of the solar system, such as parts of Jasoom and even possible isolated areas of Barsoom, there are elite cadres of warriors who take normal martial training and develop it beyond the norm. The secrets of such arts are often closely kept, with masters passing them down only to pupils they feel are ready.

The most powerful and deadly of these arts seem to defy normal martial skill. Practitioners can shatter bricks, absorb terrible blows, and do damage with their bare hands or simple weapons usually reserved for firearms and other destructive weapons.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Advanced training and manipulation of internal energies boosts the reaction times and physical force applied in combat to extraordinary levels.
- Sophisticated application of scientific principles relating to leverage, force, and kinetics allows seemingly mystical feats of martial prowess.

TALENT

ESOTERIC MARTIAL ARTS (GRADE VARIES)

- **Circumstance:** When fighting in close combat, especially when unarmed.
- **Effect:** This power is actually a number of different effects, which can be chosen and combined to form a “style” of combat that provides distinct benefits. Each of the following martial arts techniques adds to the overall grade and cost of this power.
- **Sharp Strike (+3 grades):** Unarmed damage deals 2 🎲 damage and is considered Sharp.
- **Iron Body (+1 grade):** Physical attacks inflict one less stress than normal when they hit you.
- **Disarming Block (+2 grades):** Successful defense against an incoming armed attacker disarms them and sends their weapon flying away. For 1 Momentum, you can gain the weapon themselves.
- **Fighting Art (+2 grades):** Gain a d20 bonus to close combat physical attacks and defense.
- **Deflect Projectiles (+2 grades):** Ranged physical attacks against you suffer a +1 difficulty penalty as long as you’re aware of them.
- **Throw (+2 grades):** As part of a successful attack you may throw a target to the ground anywhere within Immediate range. For 2 Momentum, you may throw them in any direction into Close range. Prone opponents suffer a +1 difficulty when attacking and defending against standing opponents until they take a Movement action to stand.

New techniques can be added and developed as desired — these are merely common examples. Techniques are often given their own names, commonly taken from beasts or objects. For example, Sharp Strike may become “Swordhand” or “Banth Claw.” These techniques may also be broken down into multiple talents for ease of use.

Hyper-Meditation

Taking the meditative practices of various cultures to the extreme, the character with this power learns to control and slow their body processes so thoroughly that not only can they feign death effectively, they are also able to survive with virtually no air, food, warmth, water, and other necessities for extended periods by placing themselves into a deep trance. This conditioning also works in less drastic situations, with those who possess it being able to casually keep going with less food, sleep, and the like for extended periods.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Intensive conditioning and study places the user into a low-level state of constant meditation which may be enhanced when necessary for greater effect.
- A mutation or adaptation allows for periods of suspended animation that prevents the need for bodily functions while keeping the user alive.

TALENT

HYPER-MEDITATION (GRADE 4)

- **Circumstance:** When going without air or sustenance.
- **Effect:** You may make a **Reason** + **Empathy** (D1) test. Success allows you to fall into a trance-like state indistinguishable from death, lasting up to a day. For each Momentum spent this duration doubles. You are vaguely aware of what is happening around you, but cannot distinguish individuals and events precisely; instead you get dreamlike impressions, faint sounds, and sense changes in light, temperature, and other conditions. Anyone striking or harming you snaps you back to full alertness, though you may remain in this state if you wish by making another **Reason** + **Empathy** (D1) test. You also receive a 1d20 bonus to all rolls to resist starvation, fatigue, pain, and other harm caused on the body.

MOLD APPEARANCE

A character possessing this power can literally shape their features to resemble another. Characters can alter their facial features and basic body shape, though they cannot truly change their form drastically — a green Martian would still be over ten feet tall with four arms, for example. This ability makes a character a natural master of disguise and with some skin dye and other basic props, an Earthborn or Martian can appear as a member of most other cultures and races. A more dramatic version of this ability allows for hair color, biological sex, and other changes.

Complications when using this ability often manifest in the form of some flaw discoverable by a close search or that otherwise renders the disguise imperfect. However, it is also possible that taking a certain appearance at a particular time leads to other problems, such as mistaken identity or attracting the enemies or loved ones of the subject duplicated.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- A surface alteration through mutation or experiment allows the slight manipulation of the skin and tissue.
- The user's body is somehow altered to have an epidermis and muscle structure that responds to psychic command.

TALENT

MOLD APPEARANCE (GRADE 2+)

- **Circumstance:** When wishing to disguise oneself or change basic appearance.
- **Effect:** You gain a 2d20 bonus to disguise and conceal yout identity. This is limited to changing basic facial features, body type, and height within a few inches.

For an additional grade, the character can change their hair and skin color. For 2 Momentum the character can push these changes to occur in a single turn.

NECROPATHY

Normally the ability to read and communicate with another's mind ends with death. However, a sensitive and powerful enough telepath can communicate with the minds of the recently deceased by picking up on residual psychic energies left in the brain. This requires a relatively intact brain, and only things the deceased was aware of can be discovered, but it can be a useful information-gathering tool or give their loved ones some small bit of solace by relaying their final thoughts and feelings.

On Barsoom, this ability is often possessed by those serving as psychologists for the noble courts of various nations. The royal psychologist of Zodanga during the Dotar Sojat era, for example, was a skilled necropath.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Using existing telepathy to pick up residual thoughts from dead minds.
- Temporarily reanimating the neural tissue so thoughts can be generated and read.

TALENT

NECROPATHY (GRADE 3)

- **Circumstance:** Communicating with the recently deceased.
- **Effect:** You make an **Empathy** + **Cunning** (D2) test. If successful you can pick up the final thoughts and emotions of a character who died no more than one day ago. You may have a conversation with the deceased using this power, this allows for simple answers, general impressions, and responses to well-crafted and focused questions, but cannot be used to push the dead to speculate, form complex thought patterns, or deduce. For 1 Momentum you can extend the time a subject can be dead by an additional day or clarify the deceased's mind, getting a more involved answer to a particular inquiry.

This power will not work on a body with a brain that has been severely damaged or destroyed. If there is some question whether a body's brain is sufficiently intact to use this power, narrators can increase the difficulty of the test to communicate, or require players to spend a Luck point to represent the good fortune of finding an intact brain.

TELEKINESIS

Given the prevalence of telepathy and other psychic abilities on Barsoom, it is not much of a stretch to presume that telekinetics — those possessing the ability to move objects and exert force with their minds — may also exist. Such powers would be highly effective, useful, and rare, but not overpowering in a land where most individuals have access to powerful firearms and airships.

Even if Barsoomians have ways to counteract or emulate telekinesis, this doesn't mean it's not effective and frightening to others. Throwing a foe across the room with a mere nod of the head or wave of the hand is an impressive display using a weapon that is impossible to disarm — the mind.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Logical evolution of the natural psychic powers of Barsoomians or psychic potential of other species.

- A special implant, gland, or other physical alteration that allows the user to control, harden, and manipulate air molecules, allowing them to move objects and exert force.

TALENT

TELEKINESIS (GRADE 6)

- **Circumstance:** When wishing to move or strike objects or characters remotely.
- **Effect:** You may use a **Passion** + **Reason** (D1) test to move or attack objects or characters up to Close range without penalty. For each range beyond Close, you suffer a +1 difficulty to your test. The attack is invisible, making it hard to defend against and giving defenders +1 difficulty to defense actions.

  Momentum may be used to increase damage, disarm foes, and other normal effects with this power. More precise or complex actions may raise the base difficulty of the **Passion** + **Reason** test at the narrator's discretion, such as picking a lock or undoing a knot.

  You may exert force on an object with this power and you may use Reason instead of Might when you do so.

  You may spend 2 Momentum to raise your Reason score by 1 for a single action.

UNDYING

Characters with this power tend to take a long time to realize it. After a certain point they notice they are almost never sick, always recover when they are, and seem to have stopped aging at some point. They still get hurt and can die through misadventure or combat, but most natural causes and the effects of aging elude them.

Interestingly enough, though this is a fabled ability that humanity has dreamed of for millennia, it is not actually that important in ***John Carter***. Carter himself is believed by some to possess this power, a and it being granted to Earthborn upon arrival to Barsoom is one explanation as to how they can match the thousand year or more average Barsoomian lifespan. But in most adventures living for centuries or longer just doesn't come up. However, it is included here because it is definitely a pulp staple and a strong motivator for characters, many of whom fear death and desire immortality the same way many humans in the real world do.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- The character is a mutation of humanity who has evolved out of the natural aging process.
- Some drug, treatment, or substance allows the character to stop aging, or age so very slowly that they will live for millennia or longer.

TALENT

UNDYING (GRADE SPECIAL)

- **Circumstance:** You do not suffer the effects of old age and death.
- **Effect:** You don't age or fear death by natural causes. While this power has great narrative potential and would be coveted by many characters in a campaign, mechanically it is only of use in two circumstances: if the narrator intends to introduce a nefarious weapon or other phenomenon that causes rapid aging, or if the campaign is of a dynastic variety that covers hundreds if not thousands of years with characters aging, dying, and being replaced by their children and other successors. In this case, this talent is valued as a Grade 1 or possibly 2 if artificial aging effects are particularly potent or common. Otherwise, a character needs an excellent justification for this power, but it carries no actual cost since it provides no effective game benefit.

7TH SENSE

By finely tuning one's senses — including telepathic abilities — to the world around them, some characters develop a sort of "7th Sense" that warns them of dangers and gives them flashes of near-future calamities. This sense is imprecise and imperfect, but its warnings are nevertheless a lifesaving tool in the psychic arsenal of those who possess it. With enough warning, the user may even alert their companions, saving them from ambush or unexpected dangers.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Telepathic abilities pick up on hostile intent and other disruptions, warning the user moments before an attack occurs.
- Sensory abilities become attuned to space-time, allowing the user's senses to perceive things that are about to occur.

TALENT

7TH SENSE (GRADE 4)

- **Circumstance:** When danger is imminent.
- **Effect:** You gain a 3d20 bonus to tests to avoid ambush, surprise, and sudden calamity. Also, you always roll to avoid surprise separately from the rest of your group. If you succeed, you gain 1 bonus Momentum and may act during the surprise round even if your side cannot. Also, you may spend 2 Momentum to share the results of your roll with another character as you give a timely warning preparing your allies for danger. This effect may be used to warn multiple companions on your side of a conflict.

MYSTERIOUS PLACES

Whether a location that became familiar to John Carter and the readers by the end of *A Princess of Mars*, or an exotic sight never seen outside of your campaign, the biomes, locations, and landscapes of Barsoom create an epic setting for your adventures.

THE LAND ITSELF

Although later novels profile a wealth of diverse biomes and environments throughout Barsoom, the landscapes of the Dotar Sojat era are more limited. The stage is set on the areas occupied by, and familiar to, the red and green Martians: dry ocean basins, hills and mountains, canals, and the many crumbling cities. Each had unique characteristics that not only made for memorable scenery, but also flavored the moments set there.

CANALS

"The people had found it necessary to follow the receding waters until necessity had forced upon them their ultimate salvation, the so-called Martian canals."

At the time of the Dotar Sojat era, the canals simply are. No living red or green Martian had discovered the secrets of their manufacture, design, or origin, all revealed in later adventures of John Carter. Rather, they are part of the land and a fact of life.

The canals of Mars criss-cross the ancient ocean beds and hills, providing water for irrigation to what farms remain. Although on Earth many cities are built around rivers and artificial waterways, this is extremely rare on Barsoom. Because the canals were developed near the end of the drying of Mars, the cities were constructed, inhabited, and abandoned first. As it is far less resource-intensive to build a canal through open ground than a city, the canals avoided the ruined metropolises wherever possible.

Animals and plants found around the Martian canals are not mentioned in *A Princess of Mars*, but it is likely they play a role on the dry ocean beds much like that of rivers in the Great Plains of the United States, or oases in a desert. An adventurer among the taller plants and even trees surrounding a canal can expect to encounter many of the creatures common on the sea beds, plus a higher chance of encountering red or green Martians on missions or simply on patrol.

PLOT SEED

River pirates have begun to prey on red farms along the banks of several canals. They do not wear any recognizable signs of rank or affiliation. The player characters are dispatched to find them and stop the attacks.

Hills and Mountains

"Before me were low hills pierced by narrow and inviting ravines. I longed to explore the country before me, and like the pioneer stock from which I sprang, to view what the landscape beyond the encircling hills might disclose."

Rising out of barren basins of vanished seas, what was once the coast of the mainland is now ranks upon ranks of rugged hills, mountains, and badlands. The terrain is harsh and rolling, dotted with towers of rocks and copses of trees. Networks of deep ravines sometimes cut a path through the rocky terrain, and they sometimes form a labyrinth best navigable by passing over them in fast-moving airships.

Ferocious and hardy as the Martians are, most fear to walk this terrain alone even when well-armed. These lands are home to vicious predators of all sorts, but the most feared might be the arbok, one of which nearly killed John Carter himself. The first ring of ancient cities lines the lowest tiers of these hills: the original settlement of the people who ultimately chased the receding oceans, leaving abandoned metropolises in their wake. Though they are the oldest, and least-well-preserved, of the cities, they abut the more defensible Martian landscapes. This makes them the preferred capitals of the green Martian tribes.

Plot Seed

Climbing mountains isn't just for the renown of the people of Earth. An expedition to the top of a treacherous massif could be a thrilling stand-alone adventure, or the beginning of a serial based on what the heroes find at the peak. It might begin as a contest between two suitors for a single beauty's affections, or a race to reach high ground in a newly flaring war. Perhaps the heroes have heard about a secret station at the peak, where artifacts of wondrous science wait for those bold enough to claim them.

The Jeddak of Mountains

During Burroughs' lifetime, most Earth astronomers had no idea about the existence of Olympus Mons — though Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli believed there was something special about the region based on his observations, the discovery of the greatest mountain in the known solar system was not made until 1971. Had Burroughs known of Olympus Mons, he would have undoubtedly made it part of his Barsoom. After all, it's a mountain two and a half times the height of Everest, with a base the size of Arizona. It also lies in largely wild areas of Barsoom, making it easy to add to a campaign.

Dry Ocean Basins

"I found myself lying prone upon a bed of yellowish, mosslike vegetation which stretched around me in all directions for interminable miles. I seemed to be lying on a deep, circular basin, along the outer verge of which I could distinguish the irregularities of low hills."

Much of the surface of Barsoom in the tales of the Dotar Sojat era were once the floors of vast oceans. As these seas receded in Mars' millennia-long drought, those beds became covered with great veldts of mossy grasses. These open plains sport low plants, including one that produces vast quantities of a milky fluid which provides the main diet for green Martians. Fierce banths and other carnivorous horrors roam these open spaces, along with green Martian hordes and their herds of thoats and zitidars.

Vast distances and open spaces are the overwhelming aspects of this environment. With the exception of trees lining the canals, and outcroppings of quartzy rock, there is little to block lines of sight for miles during the day. Only at night, and when both of Mars's moons have set, can one move across this land unseen.

Flying overhead, one can see the history of Barsoom's decline in the rings of ruined cities. Within these abandoned metropolises lie ancient murals depicting scenes of meadows strewn with trees and flowers, pools and streams: presumably what grew on the shores before the planet lost its water. Every few hundred years during that age, the seas crept back far enough that the cities' dwellers would have to move, abandoning their old citadels and rebuilding on the new shoreline.

Hidden in what wrinkles of the landscape can be found are the incubators of green Martian eggs, left to mature and hatch under the cold Martian sun. They are well-hidden and frequently checked on by armed patrols, but vulnerable to depredations by rival tribes and predators alike. Where rare water is found, one can also encounter small farms of red Martians, the fields tended as well as is possible, and the buildings constructed on 50-foot metal shafts which protect the sleeping farmers from assassination at night.

Plot Seed

A crazed traveler enters a red city or is captured by a green horde, telling of an underground ocean at the center of one dry ocean basin. He is weather-burned and ravaged by wild animals he cannot name, but willing to lead an expedition to where he claims he saw the water.

Unknown Vistas

In the later ***John Carter of Mars*** novels, Burroughs reveals other landscapes on the face of Barsoom. Readers discover fetid swamps, deep valleys, lush forests, barren deserts, subterranean cities, and polar ice caps. Even the surfaces of moons and planets served as stages for adventure, peril, and triumph.

Though some of these places hold secrets discovered after the Dotar Sojat era, many are ripe for the exploration and discovery that are such an important part of the tone and timbre of John Carter's early adventures. A protracted chase, a damaged airship run far off course, or the simple curiosity of an intrepid hero could lead player characters into these zones to (hopefully) return with tales of strange beasts and bizarre environs.

Orchards / Farmlands

"The nearer moon... lit up little patches of the landscape, disclosing walled fields and low, rambling buildings, presenting much the appearance of earthly farms."

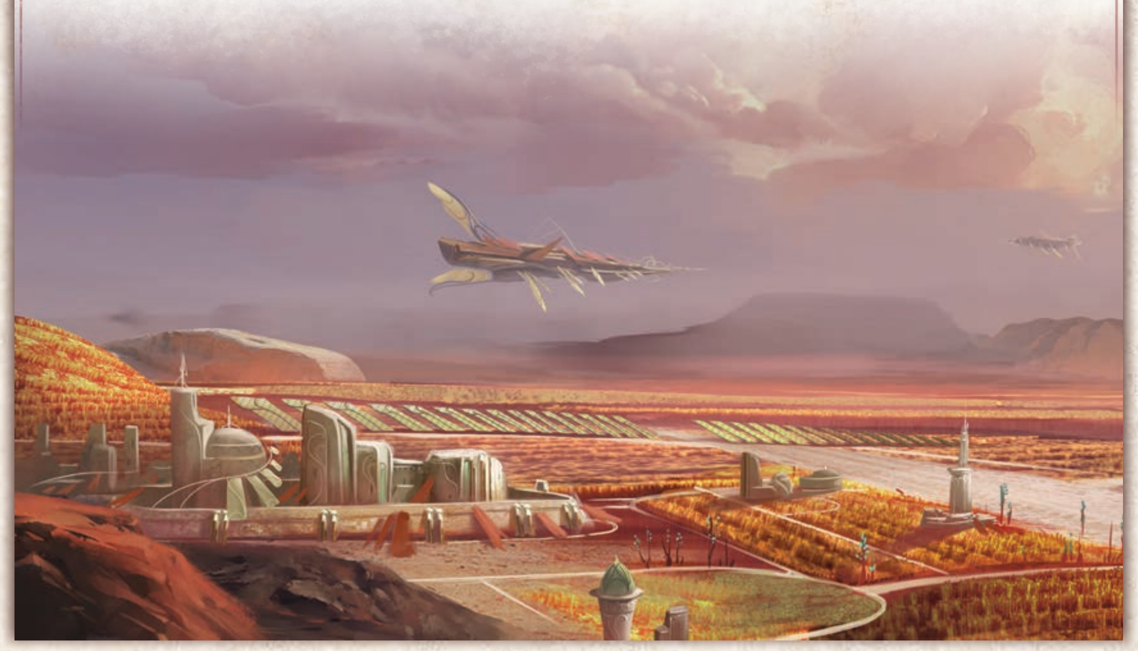
From the paintings in ancient ruins and the occasional farm still operating during the late Dotar Sojat era, one can guess at what must have existed in less severe times. Plains rich with crops not unlike Earth grains would have blown in the Martian winds, harvested to feed the teeming cities. Farm houses would have been built on the ground, not yet requiring the extra safety of rising into the air at night.

Orchards, too, would have stood across the fertile grounds, dripping with fruits unimagined by Jasoomians and decorating Martian meals like jewels adorn a necklace or bracelet. Birds and small animals would have nested among the trees, creating a pastoral scene utterly alien to the Martians of later epochs.

Of all things about the past ages of Barsoom, the loss of the farms and orchards may be the most poignant. Green Martians eat a diet almost exclusively of one product from a single, ubiquitous plant. Red Martians do not enjoy meals of much greater variety. It is probably a mercy that few, if any, of these scions of paler days fully understand how much they have lost.

Plot seed

Some thousand years before the arrival of John Carter, a small group of Martian scientists realized the farms as they knew them would vanish... at least for a time. Joined by a party of guards and guides, they set out to collect as many seeds as they could to save the plants from extinction. The legend of their journey faded in time, but was at least as epic as the exploits of John Carter. Alternatively, a later-era adventure could involve the player characters following the footsteps of the expedition to uncover the seeds and potentially alter life on Barsoom.



MARTIAN GARDENS

"The mural painting depicted scenes of... sun-kissed gardens — scenes which might have portrayed earthly views but for the different colorings of the vegetation."

These images are far more than an objective description of places in the bygone eras of Barsoom. They imply a kind of society that has been entirely forgotten, if not intentionally abandoned. To have the surplus of time and resources to create such spaces, and then to depict them in art, is not a facet of life for the red armies and green hordes of later in the era. Such luxury is rarely even imagined in those more brutal and demanding times.

However, the surviving images of these places are vivid enough to call to mind the most ambitious formal gardens of any Earth kingdom, rich with flowering plants, manicured trees, and stone-strewn paths.

The gardens have vanished from the face of Barsoom by the time of John Carter's arrival, unless some particularly botanically-minded Martians are tending to one in secret in some abandoned corner of a ruined city. Otherwise, heroes will likely only encounter these wondrous locales if they play an in earlier, more civilized era of Martian history.

PLOT SEED

A player character or one of their friends is in love with a powerful jeddak's child. The jeddak will only consent to the marriage if the suitor brings a flower thought long extinct. Fortunately, a scholarly contact knows of an ancient garden still tended in a city many karads and challenges away.

SEASIDES

"... the drying up of the Martian seas had compelled them to seek the comparatively few and always diminishing fertile areas, and to defend themselves, under new conditions of life..."

By the time of John Carter's arrival, Mars had no seasides within the known grounds of red and green Martians. However, the locations of abandoned cities in the dry ocean beds indicate where such places once were. Few stories or pieces of art remain that depict what must have once been vast and beautiful seas, leaving much to the imaginations of any narrators wishing to set a scene or story during those times.

Before the oceans began to recede, the seasides were likely places of rugged beauty. Cities would face oceans much like those of Earth: glittering expanses of water shining in the sun and dotted with craft for pleasure and trade. On the opposite side would be rich farmland marching to the foothills of Barsoom's wrinkled mountains. In Barsoom's thin air, the scents would not be as rich, nor would the sounds of the waves carry as far as on Earth. Tides would be complex, feeling the influence of both of Mars's moons. But the shores must have been as breathtaking to Martians as our own are to us Jasoomians.

As the oceans receded, the shores would have become very different. Shallower, more saline seas would no longer sport as much life. Fewer vessels would ply the waters for pleasure as life grew progressively more difficult and demanding for what Martians remained, replaced instead by ships for trade and for war. The shores would no longer sport rich farmland, but mud flats and plains scabbed over with the already abundant yellow moss, which would have begun to dominate the landscape.

None can imagine what creatures likely existed during those ancient and entirely different times. Enormous, prehistoric versions of modern Mars's greatest monsters most likely walked the shores. In the water, great fish and swimming reptiles hunted and fled. Perhaps giant bird-like creatures many times larger than the malagor soared above the open seas, only to go slowly extinct as their prey dwindled to numbers unsuitable to sustain their population.

PLOT SEED

In prehistoric times, three rival trading companies competed for a shipping contract with a jeddak of Oolona, one of the most powerful cities of the day. The jeddak declared the winner would be the company that successfully returned three great jewels from a shipwreck on a wild, monster-haunted coast.

LOCATIONS FROM A PRINCESS OF MARS

John Carter's first adventure on the face of Barsoom took him to a variety of alien, beautiful, and dangerous landscapes. One could fill a book of its own with a complete cataloguing of where tharks, zitidars, airships, and John's own feet took him during that year, but here are some details on the most important locations of his journey.

KORAD

"She said the city in which we were camping was supposed to have been a center of commerce and culture known as Korad. It had been built upon a beautiful, natural harbor, landlocked by magnificent hills."

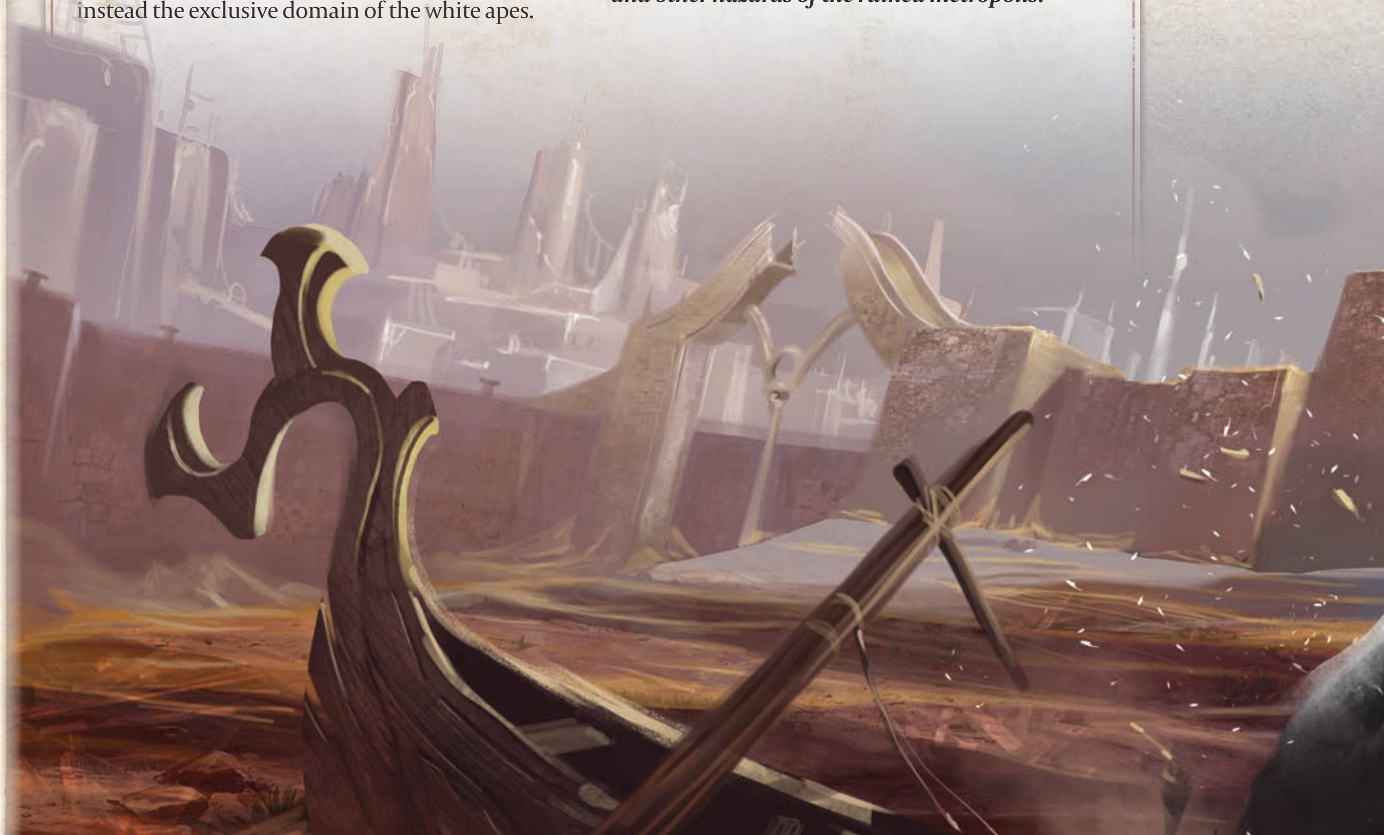
With the exception of their permanent capitals, the green Martians do not settle in any given city. Instead, they bivouac temporarily in whatever abandoned ruin suits their immediate needs. Sometimes this occupation is for but a few weeks. At other times, it is for a season or longer. When John Carter arrived on Barsoom, the Tharks under Jed Lorquas Ptomel were occupying the ancient city of Korad.

The city itself is typical of the ruins in which green Martians of all hordes squat. A central plaza lined by wide lanes serves as a palace and center of government, surrounded by huge apartment blocks where the most renowned jeds keep their homes. Clustered around this center are the abodes of warriors of lesser rank, thinning out until the buildings become increasingly empty.

The outer districts are abandoned by Martians, instead the exclusive domain of the white apes. These ferocious creatures nest in apartments that once held intelligent life, and they defend their territory with ruthless, unthinking brutality. It is said that these beasts are the only beings on Barsoom a green Martian fears, and anybody who has encountered one can well believe this rumor.

PLOT SEED

For unknown reasons, the murals depicting Barsoom's ancient past are better-preserved in Korad than in other cities of its age. A red Martian scientist believes she can discover the secret of a forgotten and potentially world-changing technology within the history told on those murals... but she requires the protection of a band of bodyguards to keep her safe from the white apes, green Tharks, and other hazards of the ruined metropolis.



GREEN MARTIAN INCUBATORS

"The roof of the enclosure was of solid glass about four or five inches in thickness, and beneath it were several hundred large eggs, perfectly round and snowy white."

A typical green Martian incubator is a low structure dozens of yards long, surrounded by an encircling defensive wall with thick, nearly unbreakable glass forming a roof. Within are several hundred green Martian eggs, left to mature until ready to hatch.

These places are interesting because they are a point of vulnerability for their parent horde, and a prize of war for all of their rivals. Left unattended in an unbounded wilderness, seemingly forgotten, they provide a ripe opportunity for enemies to slaughter future warriors before they first lift a weapon.

Heroes encountering such a nursery should feel like an Earth human upon seeing a baby bear. Their first thought should be of how near the mother (read: a party of green Martian warriors) is, and how they might escape before she turns up.

Once an incubator hatches and its contents are collected by their parent horde, they are abandoned completely. No green horde ever builds an incubator twice in the same location, lest the spot be noted by members of a rival horde.

PLOT SEED

When a green horde comes to free their hatchlings from one of their incubators, they find every single one has been born with deep red skin. In every other way they are the exact image of a healthy baby green Martian. The heroes are tasked by their jed to investigate the mystery, wherever that investigation may lead.

THE ARENA

"The arena was immense but extremely uneven and unkempt. Around it the Warhoons had piled building stone from some of the ruined edifices of the ancient city to prevent the animals and the captives from escaping."

This city of Warhoon seems much like any of the other ruins dotting the empty ocean beds of Barsoom: a collection of enormous buildings surrounded by a sheer wall, left to rot as endless cycles of days and years pass under the twin moons.

It would be just like the countless others, but for the Great Games of the Warhoons, held in a huge arena at the center of that city. Once each year, all the tribes of the Warhoon horde from across Barsoom gather for days' worth of bloody games. Slaves and prisoners are pitted against hideous beasts, or one another, fighting for survival as their captors jeer and shout. Each day, a sole survivor of the entertainment wins their freedom, and is allowed to leave without suffering (further) harm. When the games are over, the Warhoons leave the city empty until the season comes again the following year.

The bloodied ground here makes clear the purpose of the space, even when it is empty of green Martians. Wild calots and greater horrors creep in to feast on the corpses left abandoned on the field. Without rain to wash them away, the stains of blood and gore never fully fade before being refreshed anew during the next round of festivities. Heroes encountering this place during its empty times might reasonably conclude a great battle had left it empty. Adventurers encountering it during the Great Games will soon wish it had been.

PLOT SEED

Wild beasts fight in the Great Games even more often than human victims. Woola, or another beloved pet of an influential and powerful Martian leader, has somehow been captured for use in this year's Games. The companion must be rescued from a ruined city teeming with tens of thousands of blood-crazed Warhoons.

THE ATMOSPHERE PLANT

"A huge building which covered perhaps four square miles and towered two hundred feet in the air."

This enormous, windowless building the size of a village sits in the hills not very far from Korad. Outside it is featureless, square, and cyclopean. Within is a honeycomb of living chambers and workshops, which in turn surround the working guts of the atmosphere plant itself.

The atmosphere plant is responsible for supporting all life on Barsoom. It applies the ninth ray to extract breathable air from matter on Mars, keeping the air pressure for the planet life-sustaining despite a slow loss thereof over several centuries. None now alive remember the impetus or history of its construction, and but two living beings understand its workings, or even how to open its great door.

The door is a block of stone the size of a small building, held fast by a lock only openable if one imagines a specific set of tones and colors in the vicinity of the entrance. Normally, only the two keepers of the atmosphere plant know this tone. However, near the end of the Dotar Sojat era, John Carter was accidentally taught this mental combination to the lock. Ten years later, he used that knowledge to save the entire planet, shortly before being transported once again to his home on Jasoom.

PLOT SEED

One of the atmosphere plant keepers arrives at Helium in a panic, stating that an essential component of the great device has broken irreparably. To replace it, he will need a crystal the size of a zitidar. Such crystals are only found at the very bottom-most plains of the dead ocean beds, in wilds filled with beasts so terrible that banths and wild calots go nowhere near it. Heroes are needed to collect the crystal and bear its mass back to the atmosphere plant.

RED MARTIAN FARMS

"The buildings I had been hammering at in the early morning were occupied only by stock and farm produce, the house proper standing among a grove of enormous trees, and, like all red Martian homes, had been raised at night."

A shadow of what must have existed before the seas of Barsoom dried, a red Martian farm is a collection of fields and trees lining the banks of one of the planet's irrigation canals. A small group of three or four farmers will live on and work the farm, providing food for the city of their allegiance.

Though the farms may seem vulnerable out in the plains, amid the beasts of the night and the hordes of green Martians, the farmers are quite safe. Each of their buildings is built atop a shaft capable of lifting it a full fifty feet off the ground. The farmers sleep safe, far in the air, above any prowling assassins or hungry beasts.

Any given red Martian farm will be overseen by two to three families on duty there. They serve limited tours of duty as a hardship assignment before returning to their homes with an increased reputation and accompanying opportunity.

Convicts, prisoners of war, and similar captives by the dozens live on the farms and perform the manual labor. They are kept well in line by their overseers, as the penalty for disobedience is harsh and the consequence of going unarmed into the Martian wilds is almost always death.

PLOT SEED

Sent to investigate a lack of deliveries or reports from several red Martian farms, the adventurers arrive to find them entirely razed. Even the thick steel support columns have been shattered like matchsticks. What possesses the power to do this, and how to defeat it, is up to the player characters to discover.

THE DUNGEONS OF WARHOON

"The place was filled with creeping, crawling things; cold, sinuous bodies passed over me when I lay down."

The subterranean spaces beneath the palace of Warhoon held John Carter for a period he could not at the time estimate. The dungeons consist of deep passages with small alcoves on either side, each barely large enough to cast away and forget a red Martian, and just small enough to keep a green Martian uncomfortable. The dungeons are utterly dark, without sunlight or even sconces for torches. No fresh air reaches these places, and only the jailers walk free.

Whether by an accident of chance, or intentional cultivation, the dungeon crawls with vermin. Because of the darkness, no exact reports of their nature exist. However, it is known that some are large and ferocious enough to not always wait for a prisoner to die before feasting on the body.

Escape from warhoons' dungeons is likely impossible, as John Carter and Kantos Kan gave the attempt their full focus and attention for weeks, and failed. Only help from the outside or the bumblings of an unusually incompetent guard could make such a feat possible.

PLOT SEED

No force of arms, no matter how great, could hope to mount a rescue operation to the dungeons of Warhoon without losing more lives than the imprisoned personage is possibly worth. However, rumors of an escapee who made a map of secret means of egress appear from time to time. When a friend of the player characters is captured by the Warhoons, they find they have reason to investigate these rumors.

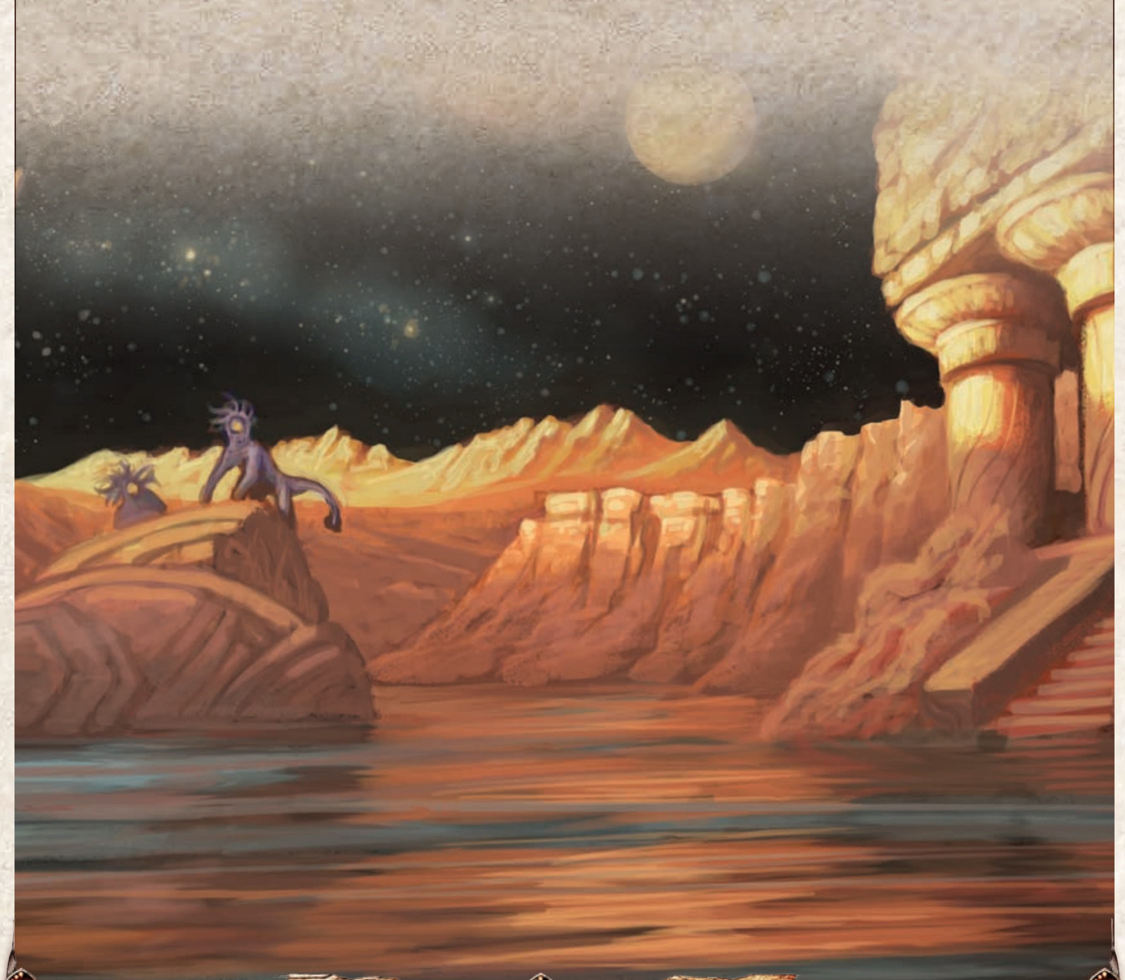
THE RIVER ISS

One of the few natural rivers still running on the face of Barsoom, this mighty flow is the center of a religious tradition common to both major Martian races. At its end are the valley Dor and the Lost Sea of Korus, to which elder Martians take their final pilgrimage as the ultimate expression of their religious zeal.

Readers into future eras of Barsoom history know where the river truly ends, and what happens to those who take the pilgrimage.

However, during the Dotar Sojat era, its legend is accepted fact. Nobody returns from the River Iss. This is one of the very few things red and green Martians can agree upon.

Of course, it is not known when this legend and practice began. During the earliest civilizations of Mars, the Iss might have held no particular religious significance at all. It may have been a forgotten waterway in an unimportant district, or a teeming trade route like the Mississippi of Jasoom's United States.



Touchstones of Mars

What makes a great location for ***John Carter*** adventures in the Dotar Sojat era? As mentioned before, the planet's bizarre and exotic landscapes form a compelling, ever-present background adding flavor and challenge to the exploits of the heroes.

No matter which specific biome a Dotar Sojat era adventure takes place in, narrators will do well to include and underscore at least one of the following characteristics in their scene design and their description at the table.

Lonely Landscapes

The spaces of Barsoom in this era are huge and empty. Even when vast armies and air navies gather in their numbers, they do so on sweeping plains, in echoing halls, and in the boundless sky. There is something about great heroic deeds performed against such cyclopean backdrops that makes their courage seem greater than it would in a cozy garden or the narrow halls of an Earth castle.

Even in the gentler, more populated times of the early Dotar Sojat period, this sense of wide, open spaces would still have permeated the world. At its greatest population, Barsoom never approached the density of even 19th century Earth. Its plains meant the sky remained open and wide, and its architecture dwarfed the lives and dramas played within.

Perilous Positions

Adventurers of the Dotar Sojat era do not leap over a fence. They scale a 50-foot wall. They don't walk up a gentle hillside. They traverse a sheer outcrop of razor-sharp rock. They don't even go to bed at night. They nest in furs and silks among the bones of a long-dead empire. At least, they don't bother to talk about having done so. Those simpler acts are trivialities, worth as much mention as successfully opening a door.

Feats of derring-do are more worthy of the tale when performed at risk from not just human foes, but from the uncaring hazards of physics and the environment. When designing a scene, consider how the surroundings can impact play at the table. Create opportunities for player and narrator characters alike to use the terrain to their advantage, and think about how you might spend Threat to turn what had been just a stage for the story you are telling into an active participant in its own right.

Of course, the many savage beasts of Barsoom add yet another flavor of peril in which to put brave adventurers. In *A Princess of Mars*, an encounter with an unknown beast (possibly an arbok) turned what amounted to a hike in the hills into a life-or-death struggle John Carter would not have survived if not for the return of his beloved Woola.

Strange Sights

To the Earthborn reader, and thus the Earthborn gamer, one alluring part of Edgar Rice Burroughs's Barsoom was its alien look and feel. As John Carter explored its environs, the very earth and plants told us all we were "not in Kansas anymore." The differences between Minneapolis and Helium, between the Great Plains and the dry ocean beds, made the scenes and familiar narratives of *A Princess of Mars*

INSPIRED LOCATIONS

Although the locations described here don't appear in *A Princess of Mars*, narrators can fit them seamlessly into a campaign or adventure. They're provided as examples of how one can take what was described in Burroughs's work and expand upon the ideas to create something new and unique for the stories a narrator wants to tell in the world of Barsoom.

THE OBSERVATORY OF SAL THARAN

Ancient beyond reckoning, and potentially the tallest independent structure on Barsoom, this building lies on the outermost edge of a crumbling ruin, atop a ridge at the peak of a stark, black hill. None remember who built the telescopes and orreries of the place, but many whisper tales of its existence.

It is said the devices within grant access not only to knowledge of the stellar bodies they can view with great accuracy and detail, but also to a view of much of the surrounding surface of Barsoom itself. During certain wars it could be tactically valuable to control such a source of intelligence. At times of relative peace, its scientific importance is difficult to overstate.

A single keeper of the Observatory lives in a stone building at the bottom, protecting the edifice and helping those who visit as best she can. Over two thousand years old, she has yet to take the pilgrimage down the River Iss and does not seem inclined to do so. None live who remember her name, and she does not give it.

PLOT SEED

One of the lenses of the observatory has shattered, victim of a border skirmish between airships flying overhead. Though the secret of creating such glass fixtures is long lost, the keeper knows of a second, ruined observatory halfway across Barsoom. Only the bravest heroes could locate it and bring the enormous object safely back across Mars's wild spaces.

THE SEA OF RUINED SHIPS

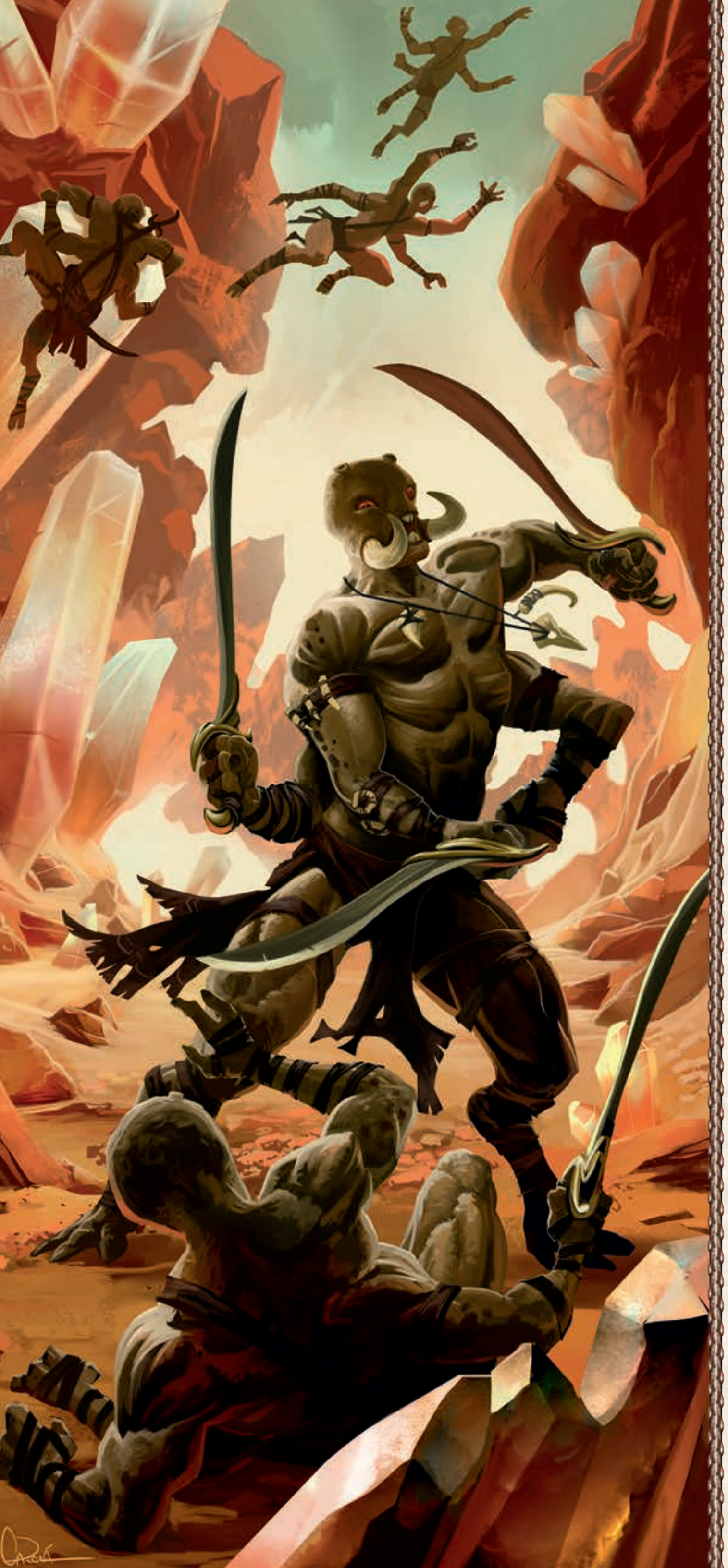
Rorandza and Oroborum were red Martian strongholds some centuries before the rise of Zodanga and Helium. Separated by only a few hundred haads, they waged war over the fate of a single young couple. Ultimately, the war destroyed both and the ruins lie empty amid the yellow moss and broken stones of the Barsoom ocean bottoms.

The ground between the abandoned ruins is a veritable forest of downed and broken airships ranging from single-man fliers to great dreadnoughts embedded in the soft soil. One can only imagine how grand the air battles above must have been to leave such a mass in its wake.

Treasure hunters and curiosity seekers sometimes roam these silent hulks, looking for something to inspire a patron, impress a lover, or simply serve an atavistic curiosity about times long past. Banths and wild calots also roam the grounds, attracted by the promise of prey nesting in the shelter of the wrecks, or more intelligent meals attracted here.

PLOT SEED

In the belly of one of the largest warships is the curiously preserved body of a woman. She has the frame and figure of a well-muscled Martian warrior, but with ebon skin and kinky dark hair. The story of who she is, how she got there, and her role in one of the many battles between Rorandza and Oroborum is a matter of wild speculation among the few who know about her. Adventurers could play out her story, or be tasked with a quest to investigate the truth of her origins.



THE ISLE OF LESSA

At the confluence of two great rivers, Lessa was one of the foremost capitals of trade, commerce, and diplomacy at the height of Martian civilization. From half the world away, lesser metropolises were proud to host a work of Lessan statuary, and peace agreements brokered in its fabled gardens lasted for centuries. It was not the largest city of its age, nor the wealthiest, but it laid valid claim on the titles of most beautiful and most sophisticated.

Before the oceans began to recede, personal jealousy meshed with civic jealousy in a saga forgotten to all but a few. In the end, the city was shattered in a surprise attack that all but leveled the towers and cracked the walls into pieces. The survivors fled. Some vowed revenge, but not enough could reorganize to even rebuild.

Millennia later, the island stand as a mesa-like bluff between two river beds. The towers have eroded to look more like rock formations than anything of human manufacture, but the hill is honeycombed with the old vaults, cellars, and dungeons.

PLOT SEED

On the night Lessa fell, a small group of Martian warriors knew about the plot. They could have stopped it, but in the last minutes failed in their intent. For some play groups, such a tragic and ultimately futile struggle could be an opportunity for great role-play... or a prequel session to a related story arc. For those wishing for more player agency, an adventure could center around salvaging what is possible from the vaults, workshops, or museums of the city: a desperate and noble mission against a backdrop of utter savagery.

THE WARHOON TRAINING STONES

At the center of a triangle of ruined cities so destroyed by war they resemble piles of stone more than collections of towers and plazas, lies a dense collection of quartzy rock outcroppings. They number in the thousands, covering a space of a few dozen square haads, with the tallest some two to three ads high. At the densest point, they stand but a single arm-span apart, while in other areas one could march a full-grown zitidar between them without scraping its hide.

This curiosity of geography lies but a few days' march from Korad, and the Warhoons have claimed it as their training ground. They climb and leap from stone to stone to build their physical prowess, while the maze of narrow passages allows for practice in team tactics and ambush. The broken sight lines teach warriors to rely less on their fearsome rifles, and to dispatch enemies from close quarters.

Both young green Martians training for the first time and experienced veterans perfecting their skills come here at least once each year. On occasion, a promising prisoner will be brought to prepare for the great games. Otherwise, none are permitted to even view the site. To do so is to invite death from the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of Warhoon fighters training within. To enter is to invite the lifelong enmity of the Warhoons.

PLOT SEED

Sinth Sarto, a Warhoon chief, slew the red Martian Muay Buran, and took a face crystal depicting his father as a prize. Muay Buran's love, Dak Sten, wishes to return it to the family. She hires or otherwise convinces the adventurers to go after Sinth Sarto and reclaim it through bargain, barter, or combat. When they discover the Warhoon's location, they learn he has gone to the training grounds, where they must hunt him, reclaim the token, and return with their lives.

NARRATING THE DOTAR SOJAT ERA

> *Placing my hand over my heart I bowed low to the Martian and explained to him that while I did not understand his language, his actions spoke for the peace and friendship that at the present moment were most dear to my heart. Of course I might have been a babbling brook for all the intelligence my speech carried to him, but he understood the action with which I immediately followed my words.*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

The world of ***John Carter*** is similar to many other pulp milieus, but has remained one of the most popular examples of the genre for a reason. Similarly, the Dotar Sojat era has many things in common with the other eras of ***John Carter of Mars*** play... but contains some themes, tones, and aspects that make it unique.

What follows are some notes for narrators to help focus their Dotar Sojat era games on those aspects, to help set it apart from other eras.

Common Themes and Tone

We've already explored how the people, technology, and lands of Barsoom combine into a setting that makes the Dotar Sojat era what it is. However, the world is more than a collection of its physical attributes. Much like the body of a Jasoomian or Barsoomian, it has a spirit that animates the flesh, giving it life, personality, and vivacity beyond the sum of its physical parts. The themes and tone of Dotar Sojat are that spirit.

What Makes Dotar Sojat Tick?

What makes *A Princess of Mars* so popular nearly a century after its release, coming from an era in which so many works were abandoned shortly after publication? If you look at the plot structure, it is an earlier example of an oft-repeated narrative. If you look at the prose, it diverges from modern standards both in form and tone. Why do they stand the test of time so well, inspiring generations of Jasoomians to read and reread them?

Others might give different answers, but for us it's the deep philosophical underlay that informs the action and conflicts of John Carter and his friends. Beneath the countless-times-retold structure of a romantic quest, beyond the pastiche of sword-and-sandal adventure, beats an honest heart exploring themes and ideas humanity still struggles with today. Despite being written roughly a century ago, the characters of Carter and his companions are compelling and heroic, often meeting or surpassing the standards for morality and courage seen in modern fiction.

The exploits of the Dotar Sojat era are far from a dry treatise on social, emotional, and ethical constructs. Instead, readers see this philosophy in action through the deeds of the characters and the impact of those deeds on the world. Characters rarely expound long on a virtue before putting it into action — often by aiding others or treating them exceptionally.

Some of these philosophies infuse every volume of the ***John Carter of Mars*** series, from *A Princess of Mars* to tales told long after Burroughs' death. These include rationality, a suspicion of blind loyalty to leaders and religions, an egalitarian view of the world, and a surprisingly gentle optimism about how much an individual can change their world for the better. Paying some attention to each of these ideas in any game can only improve the experience of everybody at the table.

However, other themes come out clearly during the action of *A Princess of Mars* and can inform adventures set during that time and earlier centuries of the Dotar Sojat era. Most important among them are discovery, constant warfare, longing, the clash of tradition versus innovation, and the value of love.

Discovery

Since the events of *A Princess of Mars* followed John Carter's discovery of and introduction to the peoples and landscapes of Barsoom, it likewise followed the readers' discovery of the world. We marveled alongside the Virginian as he explored the moss-strewn dead oceans, the impossibly tall buildings, the strange and dangerous beasts, and the rampaging green Martian hordes. We wondered at the fantastic technologies and were struck by the horrors of the brutal life on Barsoom.

The book also followed the parallel discoveries of the people of Barsoom as they encountered this strange being with supernatural strength, heroic fighting ability, and a kindness largely unknown on the face of the Red Planet. Open-minded Martians from both races found in John Carter ideas that had echoed within themselves, and in embracing him opened a door for change that impacted the entire planet.

Discovery, internal and external, is a core theme of the Dotar Sojat era. Stories set therein would do well to include, if not center around, such journeys of discovery. Even without the arrival of an extraterrestrial superhero to serve as a foil, plenty exists across the face of Barsoom to present adventurers with new experiences. These discoveries can be physical, as they explore new or lost regions and ruins in search of treasure and renown. They can be intellectual, as the heroes seek cultural and historical artifacts that could change the tide of a war, or deal with ancient technologies and new sciences.

Or, like the journeys of Tars Tarkas and Dejah Thoris, they can be emotional discoveries as feelings previously unimagined blossom to reality in the face of new experience.

CONSTANT CONFLICT

At the time of *A Princess of Mars* and many centuries preceding, war might well have been the only true constant on Barsoom. Red cities warred for pride, status, and resources, or for the renown, reputation, and romance of their leaders. Green Martian hordes warred on the plains largely for the sake of war itself. The two races clashed on sight, filling the sky with fire and littering the ground with bodies, for no reason other than an ancient enmity.

Even within allied factions, conflict remained the rule of the day. Duels to the death settled issues of social obligation, insult, and retribution. Trial by combat decided the succession of rulers. A simple slight turned quickly into a mortal combat. No place was truly safe, and violence was the single most ubiquitous and respected law of every land.

Further, internal conflicts tore at the hearts and minds of most residents of Barsoom. Tradition vied against innovation. Personality fought against the norms of civilization. Love for one promised to another, or the forbidden love of a green Martian parent for a child, strove against the iron strictures of social expectation.

This is one of the easiest themes to design into stories told in John Carter, since conflict is at the heart of most roleplaying games. Indeed, it's at the heart of almost all enjoyable fiction. Just remember that, with conflict so prevalent, you must take care to make the conflicts at the heart of your stories larger than life.

Martians, and Jasoomians on Mars, do not fall in puppy love or suffer a minor infatuation or crush. They are overcome by a love so great they are willing to sweep clear the world if need be. There are no simple bar fights on Barsoom, but rather vicious battles to the death over real or imagined slights. Never plan for a border skirmish when a pitched battle can fit the bill.

This rule applies to both the physical scale and the emotional impact of the stakes of conflict on Barsoom. The bigger, brighter, and more chaotic you can make it, the better your adventures will be.

A SENSE OF LONGING

The Martians have lost their world, and now live in a mere shadow of what existed before. This may be responsible for their almost religious following of the simplest of traditions, which could for them represent a connection to the brighter times of the past.

This longing infuses Martian thought during the Dotar Sojat era, evidenced by the military fatalism and intellectual malaise of the time. The green hordes and red cities fight their endless wars, in part perhaps because of an ingrained, nihilistic belief that their world is dying entirely, making their deaths matter very little. Meanwhile, scientific innovation is stagnated and slow. With no real belief in a better future, who would put their minds and efforts to work towards improving it?

Different adventures can approach this sense from two different directions. From one side, a narrator can use evidence of the past glory juxtaposed against the intellectual torpor and crumbling physicality of the present to establish that longing and bring it to center stage. Done well, this will help establish the setting as one of faded glory, where the acts of unusual people stand out even brighter.

From the other, an adventure or entire campaign could tell the story of a few brave, brilliant individuals fighting against that philosophical quagmire in an attempt to bring about social or technological change. Though they didn't set out to do so on purpose, this certainly describes the arc of John Carter and his friends as they met, formed alliances, and gathered to save a princess by storming a castle.

TRADITION VS. INNOVATION

When John Carter came to Barsoom, he encountered societies deeply set in their ways. Not even the all-powerful Tal Hajus could break with tradition when it was clear following its demands would lead to his death. Green and red Martians alike live by this law, observing patterns of living, being, thinking, and dying ingrained for dozens of generations. Even Dejah Thoris, deeply in love with John Carter, could not go against this tradition and renege on her promise to wed Sab Than, though she had made that promise under duress and while thinking her love to be dead.

Another example lies in the first events during the sack of Zodanga. The city's eight-ad-high walls had stood for centuries, but it wasn't until John Carter introduced the idea of building a human pyramid that the Tharks were able to scale those walls. One imagines that such a warlike people would have stumbled upon that stratagem at some point in the centuries before the Jasoomian's arrival, but a Martian's ability to innovate is smothered under the force of tradition. They never thought to scale the walls because nobody ever had. These limitations are never presented as an inherent mental or racial inferiority — instead it is an artifact of cultures sticking to what they need to survive to such an extreme that it creates blind spots and teaching opportunities for others.

Similarly, John Carter's treatment of the animals under his care began as a curiosity. His affectionate and gentle demeanor toward Woola and his riding thoats went against the green Martian practice of simply bullying lesser creatures into submission. At first the Tharks viewed this behavior with bemusement and even suspicion, but when Carter's mounts performed brilliantly in battle, his way began to influence those around him. Not every Thark jumped to lay down their sticks and gather up carrots, but the ancient walls of tradition began to show some cracks. This shows how the peoples of Barsoom, despite their traditions, are pragmatic, intelligent, and willing to learn.

Of course, this shifting tide of culture and thought was not the work of John Carter alone. His ways could have stayed a particular peculiarity of the offworlder, but Carter's gentleness and affection met fertile ground in the minds of Tars Tarkas, Kantos Kan, Sola, Lorquas Ptomel, and others. The Carter stories work and persist because they are not simply the tale of one broad-chested white man who comes in and demands that everyone turn their world into his or declare him king of all he surveys. No, they work because they are about relationships and respect. Carter's arrival is a valuable spark, but not the only flame.

One could imagine countless replayings of this theme across Barsoom before the arrival of the Earth man, where a Martian's ideas ran against that of strict tradition. Many would have simply buried those thoughts because they saw no others with similar ideas. Others might have gone against tradition with tragic results, as in the tale of Tars Tarkas, Gozava, and Sola.

Or there could have been many cycles of innovation and tradition, each ending with a new set of traditions the next generations observe as if they had always been what was expected.

THE VALUE OF LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, AND LOYALTY

In some ways, this is a subset of the innovation versus tradition theme, in that it appears in *A Princess of Mars* mostly in how John Carter's actions stand in sharp, inspiring contrast to the traditional behaviors of Martians. However, it is such a central point of the action and emotional beats of the story it deserves its own mention.

Traditional Martian culture for both red and green is a matter of duty and honor. Little love is given or lost between any given members of a tribe or city. True, they will fight at one another's side, die for their comrades, and do their utmost to fulfill a debt or promise, but most do this out of social pressure, personal ethics, or adherence to an oath.

But this precedent is not without exception. Tars Tarkas responded immediately to John Carter's expression of warrior affection and loyalty, braving more for his new friend than he would have for those he had known for decades. Likewise, Tars Tarkas' love affair with Gozava and their secreting away of the egg that would become Sola shows the seeds of this were already in the soil of Martian society. It seems that many Martians were ready to respond to such love, if only it were given.

Perhaps this is the solution to the mystery of why Barsoom went unaltered for so many generations, only to be turned upside-down by the arrival of a single man from Earth. On Jasoom, nothing motivates people to the great acts that change the world like love and loyalty, tender feelings, and true affection for the individuals closest to us. Maybe Mars was simply waiting to feel those emotions before Martians would be inspired to participate in world-shaking events. There is even an argument that Carter's most valuable cultural role in the novels is as an excuse or willing scapegoat, someone to say, "Sure, I'll take the credit and blame for being the odd outsider who lets you do things you were already wanting and willing to do."

NARRATING THE DOTAR SOJAT ERA

Though all eras of play in ***John Carter*** are steeped in common themes and motifs that make it unlike other pulp fiction and tabletop roleplaying games, each also has its own flavor and in some ways serves specific stories and play styles to a better or worse extent. This chapter looks at considerations, techniques, and advice for narrators to best leverage the strengths of the Dotar Sojat era.

WHY DOTAR SOJAT?

So little of the action in the book series occurs during this era, one might be justified in asking why they would want to set adventures in this period at all. Outside of replicating or playing within the actual events of *A Princess of Mars*, what is there for heroes to do? Put simply: a whole lot.

In part, this is because the unknown is a huge part of the Dotar Sojat era. In *A Princess of Mars*, John Carter experiences an entire planet previously unknown to him, and he experiences only a tiny part of the world he has arrived upon. Many facts about Barsoom are unknown to John Carter, and undefined for the narrator and players in a ***John Carter*** game.

This ubiquity of unknown elements is the biggest advantage of running a game set during the Dotar Sojat era. There are huge blank spaces across the planet where an ambitious narrator may run wild with creativity, unbound by the canon of the stories or the knowledge of their players.

But this fact does have a downside. The biggest disadvantage of the Dotar Sojat era is that many elements of Barsoom have yet to be introduced. The Okar, First Born, and many of the more bizarre and interesting technologies and locations, have yet to be discovered by the more dominant red and green Martians. Some narrators might feel constrained to avoid these elements—even elements they are fond of—since they canonically appear at a later date.

Overall, though, the era is a net win for creative players who want to tell stories from their imaginations. There's nothing to say the hidden elements of Barsoom weren't only unknown to *John Carter* at the time. The adventurers can find and know whatever the narrator desires.

PRE-DOTAR SOJAT

The advantage of the pre-Dotar Sojat era is its vast stretches of available time. Compared to the quarter-century or so of the Prince of Helium era and the thirty years recorded of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, it provides an enormous temporal canvas on which to set stories and adventures. Since it encompasses all of Barsoomian civilization prior to John Carter's arrival in the Earth year 1866, this means thousands upon thousands of years.

The span of time pre-Dotar Sojat can be subdivided into four separate ages: Prehistory, The Drying Times, Tides of War, and The Arrival, which marks the very beginning of the Dotar Sojat Era.

For each, we'll discuss some details of the age, ideas for adventures during that age, and some notes on characters who lived then. We'll finish with some ways each age might express or impact the major themes of the Dotar Sojat era overall.

PREHISTORY

The exact time period of this age is unknown, but it was a minimum of ten thousand years prior to the arrival of John Carter on Barsoom. During this time, the precursor Martian races to the reds and greens built enormous cities on the shores of great oceans, and explored depths of science and technology as yet unrivaled by modern Martian exploration.

It was a time of art and beauty, of kindness and love. War, though never far from the hearts of Martians from any age, was not the ever-present force it became at later times. Here people, cities, and nations had the time to explore other aspects of existence.

Little is known of this period but for its depictions in art still left in the ruins of their cities, and less is actively developed in the *John Carter* books. The narrator will need to follow the clues left in descriptions of the red cities and strange Martian technologies for inspiration.

Narrators with the creative energy to meet such a challenge could be said to have the best of both worlds: a setting as robust as the *John Carter* universe that is also a completely blank slate for development.

ADVENTURES DURING MARTIAN PREHISTORY

Much of the action during this time more resembles stories set during the Jeddak of Jeddaks and Prince of Helium eras. Many of the dangers of other periods of the Dotar Sojat era would be seen as aberrations which the player characters would be sent out to put right, rather than part of the context of life on Barsoom.

Alternatively, this is a period where more subtle challenges and cerebral adventures might be the rule of the day. Adventures might revolve around court intrigue, exploration of deep science or other planets, or far gentler romances than those of later times.

CHARACTERS OF MARTIAN PREHISTORY

From a game mechanics point of view, this may be the most challenging part of running a game during this age of life on Mars. We know from murals left in the ruined cities that the people of this time were more refined and technologically advanced than the green and red Martians most common on Barsoom by the time of John Carter's arrival. In fact, both of them were created by whatever creatures built and lived in the cities they now occupy. So, which races should be available for play during this time?

The progenitor races of Mars are said to be the Orovars, the Okar and the Firstborn, and narrators could use those descriptions, or apply the mixed character rules to combine both races and arrive at a perfectly appropriate type of Martian for play in this period.

What these characters would be like culturally is far more divergent from any Martian race as they exist in the later epochs. Although little is known for certain, there's a good chance they were more like the cultures of Earth. War was certainly part of their society, but they had time and interest for other accomplishments. This means many of the templates listed in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rules might be inappropriate or less well developed during this time, and that new templates for science, diplomacy, and the arts could fit well.

On the other hand, this part of Martian history is a blank slate in Burroughs' canon. Narrators could make up as wild a cast of characters as they wished and there would be little if anything to contradict them.

THEMES AND TONE

This age of life on Mars is pre-Dotar Sojat era, and so some of the major themes fit less well here than during later times. The sense of longing, for example, is largely absent since this is the age and the circumstances later generations of Martians are longing for. Even so, some series and campaigns could *foreshadow* that longing if the narrator so desired.

The constant conflict of this age will be less about war and more about striving against subtler challenges. Scientists fight the mysteries of the universe. Politicians vie against one another. Authorities struggle against criminals.

Explorers in this age battle against the unknown because this was an age where innovation trumped tradition. Of all the themes discussed above, this is the least appropriate. There's evidence that much of the hidebound adherence to tradition was the result of intentional manipulation of culture later in history, with the Okar and First Born working to keep the other races subservient and ignorant.

By contrast, both discovery and the importance of love and loyalty are themes this age found writ large across their dramas. The culture in general had the luxury to be more open, more gentle, and more caring for one another. Likewise, there was room for discovery across all fronts. Players in this time will be given a glimpse at a portion of Martian history but hinted at in the novels, letting everybody at the table discover something new.

THE DRYING TIME

Over the course of several thousand years, the oceans of Mars receded leaving open ocean beds in their wake. The height of Barsoom civilization began to fade, replaced by ruins and lost technologies. It was during this time that the green and red Martians arose from their common ancestors, deemed by their creators to be more likely to survive in the harsher, less forgiving environment. None know for certain how people reacted to these events.

There is great drama to be found here, as mighty beings contest not just against each other, but against the apparent dying of the planet. For example, what desperate struggle against what terrible odds must have taken place for the atmosphere plant to have been created?

Narrators might find this time of change and conflict ripe with opportunities for conflict, character, and weirdness of all stripes. It's possible the Okar and First Born had not yet sequestered themselves from the more populous races. Furthermore, given the mere half century between John Carter's exploits and those of Ulysses Paxton, there is room for hundreds of Jasoomians to have come, lived, and been forgotten during this time.

ADVENTURES DURING THE DRYING TIME

This might be the most flexible of periods in which to set adventures during the Dotar Sojat era. Within the great cities and capitals still near water, life probably continues much as it did during the prehistoric age, so all of the subtlety and science of that time are still available to challenge and intrigue your players.

At the same time, things are beginning to break down once one leaves the centers of society. All of the fighting, scrambling, drama, and derring-do of the less civilized times are available out in the drying ocean beds and the cities already abandoned.

The Drying Time also offers a sort of adventure largely unavailable during other periods. In no other period of Martian history are stories where brave, canny, resourceful adventurers literally quest to save the world so appropriate.

CHARACTERS OF THE DRYING TIME

Though it's not known for certain, some records suggest that this is when the different races of Mars separated from each other physiologically, the result of experimentation by the original Martian races in an attempt to create species capable of surviving in the newer, drying, harsher Barsoom.

It would be easy to simply take the races listed in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook as written and use them in this period. However, although the races were physically as described, they may not yet have evolved the cultures or technologies iconic to them by the time of John Carter's arrival on Barsoom. Some templates and talents might likewise be less common among some of the Martian races, or entirely absent. Narrators who choose to make that the case may want to replace them with earlier, even "rough draft" or precursor versions to keep options open for their players.

The Okar and First Born especially would require special handling for this period. It's likely they existed at this time, but equally likely that they had yet to set up their great deceits over the red and green Martians, and may have still moved among them. A series or campaign that explored the advent of their conspiracies could be a great deal of fun...

THEMES AND TONE FOR THE DRYING TIME

Of all the epochs of pre-Dotar Sojat, this may be the one where longing is the strongest. It is when that which got lost was actually lost, and the inhabitants of this time would be watching Mars diminish as the years of their lives passed by. Many campaigns set here might center around futile efforts to stop the downfall.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, the clash between tradition and innovation is at its weakest during this time. The traditions that developed and flourished during prehistory would no longer serve as the world changed, and new traditions were yet to be developed. Second to this would be constant conflict. The Drying Time is a post-apocalyptic setting, with all the panic and conflict those times take on in Earthly dramas.

Discovery looms large in this epoch as well, with both characters and players learning new things and exploring mysteries constantly. The characters will be discovering a new Barsoom, and many will be delving the deepest mysteries of science and culture in an attempt to regain what is being lost. Meanwhile, like the prehistorical period, players will find themselves acquainted with times, locations, and people unrecorded in other works about Barsoom.

Finally, the importance of love and loyalty would form the backbone of stories told during this crisis. After all, when everything falls apart isn't it the personal connections, the bonds of friendship and family, that keep everything together?

TIDES OF WAR

After at least a millennium of change, the face of Barsoom reached a new equilibrium. Its oceans were nearly spent, as was its air, both kept at a minimally livable level by great and nearly-forgotten technologies. Red cities rose, waned, and fell. Green hordes of countless names crossed and re-crossed the ancient, dry oceans. How many millions lived, fought, loved, struggled, hoped, and died during these years is incalculable.

The Martians, not the most accurate or assiduous keepers of historical record, seem to view it as an endless parade of years where the status remained violently, strivingly quo. And yet the drama, conflict, and struggle of this time can't be argued. Adventures were thick on the ground throughout it.

This is another wide-open time, and in many ways the easiest for beginning narrators to set the stories they want to tell. It is highly congruent to the game described in the ***John Carter*** rules, but only requires one to learn a subset of the rules and information described therein. At the same time, it happens before John Carter's arrival. There are no written texts to contradict what the narrator wants to happen. Even if a story might go against some thoughts and set events of the series, they need but set it two thousand years prior to Earth year 1866 and lose the action to the long decay of time.

ADVENTURES DURING TIDES OF WAR

This period of Martian history may be the best period for "adventure of the week" type games. Such episodes, serials, and campaigns follow the model of twentieth century television. In most programs of that century, each episode would depict an entertaining story for the audience and challenging situation for the characters, but would also return everything to the status quo by the time the credits rolled.

During the Tides of War period, long centuries passed with little significant change to the world, the land, or the cultures of Barsoom. Hence, such a game would be uniquely suitable during this time.

CHARACTERS OF TIDES OF WAR

By this time, each of the races of Barsoom will have developed into their full physicality and culture as described in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook. Players and narrators can use them wholesale with no problems.

Remember, however, that this period of time covers unknown centuries before the world is as John Carter found it. It's likely that many of the cities, conflicts, and stories known to us have yet to exist on the face of Barsoom. Helium might still be an empty ruin, while Toonol, or Duhor, or some unknown city is in its primacy. Perhaps a series or campaign could tell the story of the green Martian horde Sparag, and the mighty brothers Warhoon and Thark whose conflict split their tribe forever.

THEMES AND TONE FOR TIDES OF WAR

The themes and tones of the Dotar Sojat era are strong during this time, as life here reflects the status quo which the earliest ***John Carter*** adventures fundamentally changed. Constant conflict is the rule of the day. Discovery and longing are ever present both in game, and in a game design sense.

The clash between tradition and innovation might be a little weaker here. Much of the challenge and ultimate break with tradition appears to have happened with John Carter's arrival as a catalyst. However, there's also ample evidence that iconoclasts and rebels existed well before then.

The importance of love, loyalty, and friendship might similarly be muted during this brutal age. It's plain that these bonds were important, but they might have been indulged less often, scorned as weak or unworthy.

THE ARRIVAL

This fourth period is extremely brief in length compared to the vast spans of the ages that came before, lasting only a single year. But what a year! By the end of this, life throughout the red cities and green hordes is forever altered.

The beginning of the Dotar Sojat era can feel like the most restrictive era of play, since the detail of its most important action is already set. The stage is filled with world-altering acts by great men and women. However, this is also the era when tension between tradition and innovation finally breaks. This could be just because of John Carter's action, and the willingness of a few Martians to follow his lead… but it could also be the result of multiple similar stories being told across the face of Barsoom.

ADVENTURES DURING THE ARRIVAL

When designing adventures during this period, most narrators will choose one of three approaches.

Some may wish to place their games in the middle of the action of *A Princess of Mars*, either by having players take on the roles of the main characters, or as people on the periphery of the story. Either way, the "big names" of the John Carter canon will be front and center throughout the series. This may be the most restrictive option, as most game groups will be reluctant to alter the "course of history" as it were.

Others might wish to set their games far away, exploring other actions and conflict taking place at the same time, but unrelated or only loosely connected to John Carter, Tars Tarkas, Sola, and Dejah Thoris. This option is less restrictive, but requires the narrator to invent new characters rather than using some of the resources already provided.

A middle ground option places the player characters near the action of *A Princess of Mars* but not in the middle. They might be Warhoon raiders who only meet John Carter and Kantos Kan while watching their battle in the arena, or surviving Heliumites from the battle where Dejah Thoris was captured, struggling to get home through Thark territory and report the disaster to Kantos Kan. This option "splits the difference," allowing the narrator great creative room while still offering a few strong linchpins on which to build a story.

CHARACTERS OF THE ARRIVAL

The question here isn't which *type* of characters work for this period. All of the races, templates, and talents can be found largely as described. The question is *who* you want to put "on screen" during adventures set in this time.

As with designing adventures set during this time, the more a narrator uses the named characters from *A Princess of Mars*, the more of their design work is done for them. The books describe these characters' basic personalities and abilities, and the rules set out their in-game statistics. However, the cost of that reduced workload is reduced room for creativity. It's possible to make Kantos Kan a sneaking villain, or Tars Tarkas a coward, but such changes are ultimately counter to some of the reasons people choose to play in an established world like Barsoom.

Avoiding the key characters produces the flip side of that coin. The narrator has much greater freedom, but has opted to take on much more work as they now have to create characters from scratch.

THEMES AND TONE OF THE ARRIVAL

This period is the default setting for ***John Carter*** during the Dotar Sojat era. All of the major themes for roleplay during the era are deeply appropriate for play during this time.

Narrators may want to especially emphasize tradition versus innovation and the importance of love, loyalty, and friendship, as those were at the crux of the great changes that occurred during this year on the face of Barsoom.

On the other hand, stories told concurrently with, but not as a part of, John Carter's own journey might eschew those tones and put emphasis on others, making the tales as different as possible from the story laid down in *A Princess of Mars*.

ADVENTURES IN DOTAR SOJAT

The perils of the Dotar Sojat era were not typically subtle. Later adventures of John Carter, Carthoris, and Ulysses Paxton included such challenges as mind control, illusions, double-blinds, espionage, and even the occasional moral quandary.

Not so during Dotar Sojat. A hero of such an age might single-handedly engage an entire green Martian horde, or scale the side of a mile-high building, or race across a sere plain with a dozen white apes at their back. They might even befriend previously untamable beasts and bring them to bear against an enemy previously thought undefeatable.

But they're unlikely to get into a funk about which potential lover to woo while worrying what to wear for the occasion. That's not to say there is no room in the Dotar Sojat era for narrators to tell stories about the more courtly sides of planetary, rational romance. There are plenty of consequences in the halls of love and power for erring on that more genteel playing field.

Beyond that, adventures should be infused with the themes already discussed: discovery, constant conflict, longing, tradition vs. innovation, and the value of love and friendship.

The ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook describes adventure design at three different levels. Episodes indicate one-shot scenarios which tell a single tale over the course of one or two game sessions. Serials are a linked set of adventures telling a longer tale, played out over many meetings. At the largest level are campaigns, which follow the exploits of a set of player characters over several serials and episodes.

Different techniques and considerations exist for making each level set in the Dotar Sojat era uniquely evocative of the core philosophies and facts of the era.

DOTAR SOJAT EPISODES

At the episode level, infusing the action with the spirit of the Dotar Sojat era requires three things: a viable enemy, a thrilling location, and a stirring motivation. If you can combine these elements, you'll have the underpinnings of an excellent Dotar Sojat game session no matter which period you set it in.

One could say that of the core themes of the era, tradition vs. innovation is among the best for driving an excellent villain. Sarkoja wasn't terrible because she was cruel. All green Martians are cruel. She was terrible because she used the demands of tradition to hold back and punish true love. Tal Hajus held his position because tradition required allegiance, not because any of his jeds approved of his salacious and gluttonous ways. Tradition protects and enables villainous sorts to continue being villainous, where otherwise one hero or another would have put a stop to them.

That's not to say other themes won't appear, or are inappropriate motivators for the villain. It's simply the easiest and most appropriate to this particular level of game.

Thrilling locations are the easiest part of episode design. Once you've set up the flow and scenes of the episode, think about the particulars of where each is set. Almost every environment in the Dotar Sojat era provides ample opportunity for making a scene more dangerous, complicated, and interesting.

For your stirring motivation, look to the importance of love, loyalty, and friendship. Whether it's a romantic love affair, loyalty to horde or city, or simply the camaraderie of warriors, that connection will provide the connective tissue to get your heroes from point A to the thrilling conclusion of your story.

THE STATUS QUO PROBLEM

The Dotar Sojat era has an apparent inconsistency that could present a challenge to some narrators. On the one hand, John Carter wreaks sweeping and permanent changes throughout green and red Martian society in a matter of months, celebrating the ability of a single being to impact the world in which they live. On the other, this happens after millennia of unchanged stasis where life for Martians went on with a seemingly permanent inertia.

What elements of John Carter's arrival made the world of Barsoom so ready to change after such vast spans of unaltered time? Certainly, the man's charisma and fighting ability had something to do with it, but the behaviors of Sola, Tars Tarkas, and others show that Mars was ready for the change.

Perhaps John Carter was just the first of many to unite the red and green Martians and begin a renaissance across Barsoom. It might be that the inertia of war and conflict is in the very genes of those races, and they are doomed to repeat the cycle of unification under a charismatic force, followed by a slow decay back into conflict and chaos. Maybe the Okar and the First Born, forgotten by the time of John Carter's arrival, have been discovered more than once, only to manipulate the "lesser" races back into their "proper" place.

Also, don't forget that what is seen as an unchanging status quo may be the product of hindsight and selective understanding. Some of the traditions, customs, and developments that have "always" existed might be products of past calamities, conflicts, and heroics whose details have been muddied or lost. Adventures set in the past might serve as origin stories for such developments, detailing how culture changed so completely that it was believed best to treat it as if this was the way things always were and should be.

DOTAR SOJAT SERIES

When binding episodes into a series, the same elements are in play but it does take a little change in approach to keep them interesting over a longer time span.

Series do best with the same villain, or set of them. If that villain is a sentient being, the challenge is keeping them alive long enough to be present at the series finale. One method for doing this is to put layers of mystery, minions, and process between the villain and the heroes. The player characters might not know the true identity of their enemy until the final episode, or they know but can't reach their nemesis. The other option is to make the enemy a force or organization, like a conspiracy or the dangers of wilderness, so your player characters can defeat it as often as they like. They have to change their context before the danger is truly resolved. Creating two or more individual villains working as friendly rivals or temporary allies combines both methods, allowing plots to continue even if the heroes do away with one or more of the villains behind them.

Similarly, your motivation must be strong enough, and hard enough to accomplish, to last for several episodes. A simple "MacGuffin hunt" is resolved as soon as the treasure is acquired, and wooing an adventurer's one true love rarely stays interesting for more than an episode or two. A narrator needs to think bigger, either by creating layers of challenge between the heroes and their goal, or by making the scale of the goal just too large to achieve in a single adventure.

As for locations, you can choose to keep an entire series within a small geographical area or expand it so the player characters do some moving around. Either way, keeping this sharp and entertaining is a matter of applying the characteristics of each environment to create challenge, danger, and complexity enough to keep things just slightly more interesting than the adventurers would hope.

DOTAR SOJAT CAMPAIGNS

A campaign might cover a year or more of time in-game, and multiple years of time in the real world. To keep players engaged and the stories interesting, narrators must work hard to maximize the engagement of each key factor.

By the time your campaign ends its second series, the enemy and the motivation should be intrinsically linked. There should be no way the motivation can be accomplished without defeating the enemy, or for the enemy to thrive if the player characters achieve their motivations. Without this essential entanglement, both factors fall flat over the long term.

A possible exception to this is when narrators wish to create a conflict of motivations. What if, in order to rescue a love interest, the player characters must allow an enemy to escape or make a meaningful advancement of their fiendish master plan. This makes for good fiction and game play, but still connects the two factors in ways that impact the narrative. Further, this should not be the point of the campaign, but rather the action of a single episode, adding flavor to the whole without detracting from it.

Another thing to avoid doing at the campaign level is the "princess in another castle" game. If an enemy keeps escaping time after time, or the rescue missions continue to find empty cells and a clue to the next prison, your players will grow frustrated over the course of an entire campaign. Instead, allow for meaningful progress every series or two.

In *A Princess of Mars* John Carter doesn't fail to rescue Dejah Thoris until the end. He interacts with her often and rescues her twice, losing her again only after there is time for them both to enjoy scenes of reunion, revelation, and character development. In a campaign against a terrible conspiracy, defeating increasingly larger cells and layers of the plot, including the gratifying deaths of the leaders of each, is better than waiting until the campaign's end to score a single grand victory.

The same holds true for adversaries. While a mocking villain who always just manages to escape is a staple of pulp fiction, it can become tiresome to players, who can feel like that escape robs them of victory at the end of an episode. One solution to this is to have multiple adversaries, whether they be increasingly higher ranking members of the same group or unaffiliated dangers from multiple locations. If the campaign does center around a single enemy, narrators should allow partial or temporary victories against the adversary every few sessions.

A proper Dotar Sojat era campaign should move through all of the major environs of Barsoom, plus one or two the narrator invented, thus assuring a wealth of thrilling locations for the player characters to explore. Further, it can be helpful to return to locations periodically throughout the campaign. This grants a sense of familiarity, and with a little work lets the player characters exploit that familiarity to their advantage, which is surprisingly gratifying for narrator and players alike.

ACROSS THE AGES

In a sort of middle ground between a series and a campaign, a narrator could tell an interesting story by running a number of series, each with different player characters and set in centuries distant from one another. With such a structure, one could conceivably explore the *entire* Dotar Sojat era, one generation at a time, unearthing the secrets that set the stage for John Carter's arrival and the fundamental changing of all Barsoom.

A PRINCESS OF MARS CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

A campaign in John Carter is likened to the entire run of a television show, with a serial akin to a single season, and episodes being eponymous. With that in mind, the action in *A Princess of Mars* could be the run of an entire campaign.

The campaign would follow the exploits of John Carter's arrival on Mars, his journey through its people and environs, and his climb in Barsoom society from a captive interloper to a fully respected jed and uniter of two great nations.

That story could be divided into three serials. The first begins with John Carter's arrival on Mars and ends with his escape with Sola and Dejah Thoris from the city of Thark. (Though it takes up approximately half the novel, it's not until this point that the protagonist starts making meaningful decisions of his own.) The second serial follows his escape up to his capture by the Warhoons. The third would quickly pass through his imprisonment in the Warhoon dungeons, spend time with the Great Games, and end with him getting up amid the corpses and sneaking out of the city. Although it got very little time on screen in the novel, an entire serial could be made of Carter's travel to and arrival in Zodanga, and his enlistment, training, and rise through their navy. The final chapters would follow him through his gathering Heliumite and Thark allies and the sack of Zodanga.

Each serial consists of several episodes, each an adventure in its own right. The serial of the time between the Great Games and Dotar Sojat's leaving the Zodangan navy might be split up thusly:

- The journey from Warhoon to Zodanga,

  including the encounters at the atmosphere plant and the red Martian farm
- Entering Zodanga, gathering information, meeting Kantos Kan, and entering the navy
- A montage sequence of training exercises, each a challenging encounter in its own right, with washing out or losing the potential of becoming officers as a meaningful stake
- The graduation ceremony followed by the cruise where he meets up with the Tharks.

Earlier we mentioned the three elements of excellent Dotar Sojat adventures: a viable enemy, thrilling locations, and a stirring motivation. Within this campaign, all three can be seen in action.

For enemies, the campaign takes the multiple adversary approach. Each stage of John Carter's journey requires him to fight and defeat different foes. First he must fight against green Martian tradition and earn his place among the Tharks. Then he must fight the authority of Tal Hajus. When he escapes the mad jeddak, his next adversaries are the Warhoons. After a brief contest against nature itself, his final enemy is the city of Helium, her armies, and her rulers. Only then does he achieve his goal and end the campaign as a successful hero.

The hero's stirring motivation is obvious: rescue and wed the beautiful Dejah Thoris. The book provides an excellent example of how to layer this motivation to allow for partial victories. John Carter must win her love, which he does early, but doesn't realize this until much later. He must win her freedom from captivity twice, and from tradition another time. When he succeeds with each, it's a meaningful victory, but final triumph only comes after multiple successful trials.

The locations featured in the entire campaign are thrilling, dangerous, and steeped in mystery. The discovery theme gives this a boost, too, as Carter and the reader are experiencing them for the first time. In each episode, Carter discovers not just the beauty but the hazards of each environ. Tharks patrol the ocean basin. Evil warlords control the inner cities, and white apes hunt the outer. Wild beasts hunt in the wilds, and the towers of the wealthy are scalable for those undaunted by a thousand-foot fall. These elements make each trial and challenge to John Carter and his friends more heroic and exciting because of the added danger.

Put all together, it's easy to see why the action and progress of *A Princess of Mars* has engaged so many readers. For your own game, it's a strong template for what can help you to engage your players for session after session until you've told your story to its ultimate and nail-biting finale.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

What follows is a collection of ideas for adventures set within various ages before and during the Dotar Sojat era. Each takes into account and demonstrates the principles outlined earlier in this chapter, and can serve as a direct map for your own episodes and serial, or as a jumping-off point for your creativity.

MOONS-CROSSED LOVERS

When the Warhoon jed Dox Koja captured Shurtain, a lady of Zodanga, his intent was to torture her to death for the amusement of his chiefs, elevating his status with his jeddak. As they brought her in chains across the basins of Barsoom, the strangest thing happened. The two Martians from enemy races and wildly different experiences began to speak, and to fall in love.

By the time of Dox Koja's arrival at Korad, he is desperate to find a means of escape with his love. He gathers his most loyal chiefs, those he knows will do his will no matter how strange it is to them. At the same time, a team of Zodangan warriors infiltrates the city, ready to free Shurtain or to sell their lives dearly in the attempt.

Whether playing Dox Koja's bodyguard, the Zodangan raiders, or Warhoons intent on capturing the iconoclastic lovers, the player characters are thrust into a dangerous and complicated web of high emotions and high adventure.

CHARACTERS

- A **Savage Green Warrior** disgusted by Dox Koja's soft emotions
- A dozen **Loyal Chiefs** who will back their jed's plan to the death
- A **Beautiful Handmaid** captured along with Shurtain

VARIATIONS

- One member of the Zodangan rescue party volunteered because he himself is in love with Shurtain, having adored her from afar for years prior to her capture. He has come to prove his worth to his intended, and secure her hand in marriage.
- Taking a page from *A Princess of Mars*, Shurtain or Dax Koja could be pledged to somebody else already... but even on Barsoom, the heart wants what the heart wants. How might the adventurers help secure the liberty of the betrothed so they can marry without further conflict of honor and tradition? This particular variation is a perfect fit for the Dotar Sojat era, as it feels charmingly, utterly Martian for a couple to be willing to flout the expectations that they not love one another, while clinging unendingly to the seemingly smaller taboo against breaking off a marriage engagement.
- A narrator could turn this adventure into a series, or entire campaign, as the lovers work to first have a small group of Martians accept their union. As the group accretes to them, with more and more coming over time, they ultimately form a community transforming the timbre of the campaign. At the end, the adventurers could work to unify their horde with the city of Zodanga, in much the same way John Carter did the Tharks and Helium, fundamentally (if perhaps temporarily) changing the face of Martian culture.

THE APES AMONG US

A green horde has moved into a new ruined city with the intent of encamping for a season. All goes according to plan until white apes attack their headquarters in an organized effort. When their jed falls to a pair of the apes, survivors of the initial assault are trapped in the city's central citadel. While the beasts prowl, and growl, and slaver in the streets, the surviving chiefs must decide who will assume command.

Ultimate rulership of the horde will fall to whoever shows the most valor and tactical brilliance in the conflict with the white apes — the leader who brings the embattled horde to safety. The apes lack sophisticated tactics, but have added basic cooperation to their usual methods of direct, brutal, unthinking force. Worse, they appear to be attacking with a level of intent *previously unseen in the beasts.*

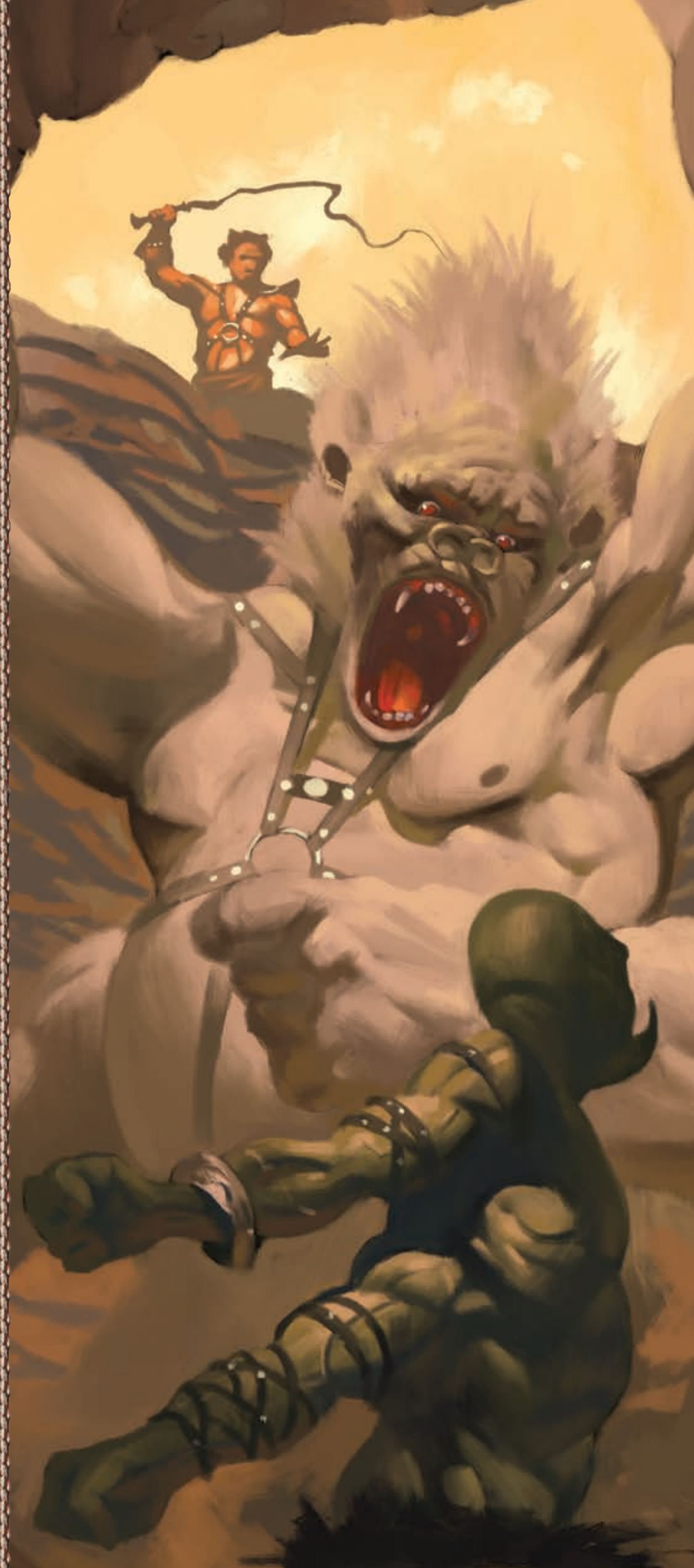
Investigation eventually discovers a red Martian lurking in the shadows, in the rear echelon of the white ape troops. This will be found to be Parto Olvu, a philosopher and criminal from Zodanga driven into the wild by his jed. He has discovered how to train the white apes of Barsoom, and is testing them on the unfortunate green Martians, preparatory to bringing them to war against his former city.

CHARACTERS

- Various **Green Martian Chiefs** vying for leadership of the horde
- A **Young Weakling** with scientific leanings, who might be the first to understand what is happening
- A pack of **Eager Young Warriors** who want to prove their worth, but whose reckless courage might get the entire horde killed

VARIATIONS

- The horde stopped in the city to torture and kill a red Martian they recently captured. The prisoner is from Zodanga and knows Parto Olvu. Will the other characters release him and seek his help? Will they dispose of him since the hour calls for exigency? What will be the consequences of whatever decision they make?
- A narrator could borrow a page from the 1990s movie (and Michael Crichton bestseller) *Congo*, in which a tribe of monkeys isn't led by a live scientist, but were trained generations previously by the original inhabitants of a ruined city. These guard apes could still be defending an ancient treasure, or a secret with the potential to alter the course of every adventurer's life.
- Instead of being trapped with the rest of the horde, the player characters are either a rearguard patrol or a party unrelated to the green Martians trapped in the city. They can arrive on the scene *in media res*, and make their own decisions about what to do about it.
- For a one-off game, each player character could play one of the chiefs of the horde. The session could focus on their competition and machinations as each tries to simultaneously save their people and secure their new position.



The Storm Engine

When the third ring of Oceanside was abandoned, the scientist Sharn Datum had the inspiration for a humidifying engine, a massive device that would bring water to the planet just as the atmosphere plant was keeping the air breathable. For Sharn Datum's device to work, he requires the help of Kairo Kan, a scientist from another city, some three weeks' travel away. The machine relies on application of the ninth ray, passing it through matter in a way that releases the water held within it as a gas, thus increasing the general moisture in the air.

The adventurers accompany Sharn Datum on a journey to the rival city, where they must protect him as he clandestinely enters and makes contact with his colleague. Upon arrival, it becomes apparent there is bad blood between Sharn Datum and Kairo Kan. Both are in love with Petalna, a princess of Kairo Kan's city who was abducted from Sharn Datum's home some six years before. What's more, Petalna's husband has just died in a duel, so her hand is available. With the fate of Barsoom at stake, the adventurers must find a way to put to rest the scientists' rivalries long enough to finish work on the Storm Engine.

CHARACTERS

- A **Wealthy Noble** also pursuing Petalna's affections
- A squad of **Zealous Guardians** in pursuit of Sharn Datum
- A **Rival Scientist** obsessed with Kairo Kan's research

VARIATIONS

- The adventurers aren't on Sharn Datum's side. Instead, they are tasked with preventing him from completing his engine, which their jeddak believes would actually destroy the atmosphere plant and hasten the demise of all life on the planet. They are forbidden from simply killing the scientist, due to a favor he once did the jeddak of their city, and must rather find other ways to distract or stop him.
- The jeddak of Kairo Kan's city has announced he will undertake the pilgrimage down the River Iss in ten days' time. He has no living heir, and the city is rife with intrigue, jockeying, influence peddling, and outright violence as the most influential jeds position themselves to step into the throne once the jeddak leaves it. What impact might an apparent spy and an illicit love have on this tangle of motivations and alliances?
- By the time of John Carter's arrival on Barsoom, it's clear the Storm Engine is no longer, or was never, functioning.
- As the adventure continues, the player characters discover hints that not all is right. Following clues, they discover that Sharn Datum and Kairo Kan are both being manipulated by a group of First Born who want to *actively accelerate* the drying of Barsoom. Their motivations begin as unclear, but the heroes must stop the scientists and the cultists before their task is finished.

For a Blood-Red Throne

In Zodanga, not everybody is committed only to defeating Helium. Some of the city's lesser jeds see an opportunity for advancement. As their braver betters die in battle, these beings of smaller spirit rise to fill ranks that would normally be far above their reach.

A conspiracy, led by Rin Xinda, is subtly shading things toward Zodanga's ultimate defeat. He is not a jed, but rather an advisor playing many ends against the middle. He is confident his own position will be secure at the right hand of whichever survivor emerges as the regent under Helium's control.

When Dejah Thoris arrives on the scene, Rin Xinda's plans are accelerated. If the war ends too soon, not enough dead will leave spaces in the halls of power. Though he has taken pains to remain apparently blameless, he fears all of his plans will come to naught.

He approaches the player characters, using a combination of bribery and subtle misdirection, convincing them to assassinate the Heliumite princess before her wedding can bring a premature peace. The adventurers may or may not learn the truth of the situation – and doing so may or may not impact their decisions.

CHARACTERS

- Several **Ambitious Jeds**, members of the conspiracy
- A **Skilled Assassin**, employed by Rin Xinda as a backup to silence any conspirators he feels might give away the plot

VARIATIONS

- The adventurers are a member of the Zodangan Royal Guard, and have heard rumors of a conspiracy within the jeddak's chiefs. As they investigate, they learn the details of Rin Xinda's perfidy and must take appropriate action.
- Rin Xinda's motivations are further darkened by falling in love with Dejah Thoris himself. With or without the player characters involved, he begins setting in motion a plot that will result in Sab Than's death so he can capture and marry the princess.
- What if the player characters were not Zodangan, but rather members of the Helium military or allies of John Carter? Word of this conspiracy could reach the right ears, and the adventurers would be tasked with infiltrating the city to take the best advantage of this rift in the middle ranks.

TOGETHER AGAINST THE WILD

During a battle between the forces of Helium and the green Martian Warhoons, a raiding party manages to board a Heliumite airship. The vicious battle rages above decks as green and red warriors vie for control of the mighty vessel. During the fighting, the ship's navigation controls are damaged and its buoyancy tanks punctured.

The ship drifts for an hour while the fighting continues, zooming over the Barsoomian landscape at fantastic speeds even for the wondrous airships of the red Martians. Ultimately, the lost altitude causes it to crash into the side of a mountainous crag.

Those who survive the impact, many of whom are wounded, find themselves in a barren and mountainous region. The howls of horrific beasts are already growing nearer as the warriors pick themselves up from where the wreck threw their bodies.

They must survive the first waves of monsters long enough to set up a perimeter, which means cooperating with their ancient enemies. Then they must find a way to get home. Without helping one another, none can hope to survive the long and dangerous journey.

CHARACTERS

- A **Wounded Officer** whose men won't abandon him despite his immobility
- Several **Thark Warriors** initially disinclined to cooperate with the red Martians
- A **Red Martian Scientist** who seems more interested in studying the beasts than in surviving the encounter

VARIATIONS

- The raid wasn't part of a major battle, but rather an isolated act of piracy specifically to steal a precious piece of cargo aboard the airship. Along with the exterior conflicts and internal tension, a few survivors are aware of the cargo and its value, and must maneuver themselves into a position to be the last ones alive possessing it.
- One of the surviving red Martians is convinced she can repair the airship enough to fly everybody out of the hostile territory, but it will take time. What was a forced march becomes a protracted siege, as the adventurers build, defend, and repair perimeter defenses against increasingly larger waves of enemies. Once the airship is repaired, tension mounts when several red Martians unite to refuse the greens access.
- One of the survivors is a zealot who believes all members of the other Martian race should die, and is willing to act on that belief. Though unwilling to act in the open, he will subtly manipulate battles so the enemy race dies at a faster rate than those of his own.
- Honestly, if a narrator doesn't think to stick an inconvenient love affair in here somewhere, we don't know what we're doing.

TIME AFTER TIME

In the endless span of years before Barsoom's seas began to recede, a Jasoomian arrived among the progenitor races of the green and red Martians. Greeted with suspicion, then respected for his might and deeds, he became embroiled in a civil war between rival families of Quorquel and Ismander fighting for rulership of a great city lying on the shores of a vast and beautiful ocean.

The adventurers are the major players of this great saga, which itself wreaks changes as significant on the civilization of that time as John Carter did in his. They play the Jasoomian, the Tars Tarkas, the Kantos Kan, the Lorquas Ptomel of that tale, ultimately ending the war either through negotiating a peace or helping one family defeat the other in physical and political conflict.

CHARACTERS

- A **Hotheaded Bravo** from the Quorquel family seeking to grow his personal renown
- **Benevolent Leaders** of the existing city rulership seeking to ally themselves with one family or the other and end the violence
- A **Curious Elder** more interested in the Jasoomian than in the war

VARIATIONS

- The timelines involved could mean the Jasoomian is from ancient Egypt, or the earliest eras of Chinese history. This could expand out from a single adventure to an entire campaign with flavors from those cultures mixing with those of a previously unexplored epoch on Barsoom. Narrators willing to borrow from other pulp traditions could even make the Jasoomian hail from a pre-human civilization like the Serpent-men of Set from Robert E. Howard's Kull and Conan stories.
- It would not take much effort to add small historical Easter eggs of Earth or Barsoom history. Perhaps the actions of the player characters set into motion the events that caused Mars to begin dying. Or they return home with Martian ideas or technologies responsible for the Neolithic Revolution, the domestication of horses, Greek democracy, or the advent of formal martial arts.
- The civil war could be the product of manipulation by Okar, who fear an alliance between the two cities would ultimately lead to their discovery and defeat. It's possible their interference has prevented such occurrences countless times over the ages.

EVENTS AND INCIDENTS

The following collection of random tables can help narrators looking for guidance when creating era-appropriate events, occurrences, and incidents. These events are meant to provide broad inspiration and encourage creative play. If the results don't mesh with an existing adventure or campaign, narrators should ignore or alter the results as desired.

REGIONAL EVENTS

These events are large-scale occurrences that take place periodically in a kingdom or region. Generally, these events happen no more than once a month and occur at the beginning of an adventure or campaign arc to establish background details and possible challenges. Details of each event and its possible effects follow.

D20	REGIONAL EVENT
01	Great Storm
02–04	Raiders
05–06	Border Skirmish
07–08	Predator Attack
09–10	A Great Find
11–12	War Looms
13	Disaster
14–15	Celebration
16–17	A Great Challenge
18	Strangers from Afar
19–20	Roll Twice and Combine

GREAT STORM

A massive storm sweeps over the area, making air travel difficult and damaging structures. Attempts to fly or navigate in the storm suffer +2 to difficulty. Further, rough winds and difficult weather follow for weeks to come and narrators gain 1 free Threat each scene to create obstacles based on weather or the after-effects of the storm.

RAIDERS

Raiders, pirates, or some other enemy attack the area. They take supplies, capture or kill citizens, and plunder valuables. While the raiders are active in the area, any Threat the narrator spends to create minion-class raiders or pirates in a scene generates 2 additional minions.

BORDER SKIRMISH

A small but noteworthy conflict occurs between the region and one of their neighbors. This leads to increased animosity between these two groups. In addition, pockets of deserters or enemy patrols are sometimes encountered. During this conflict, Threat cost to create enemies or obstacles are reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

PREDATOR ATTACK

Some dangerous beast moves into the area and is attacking those who venture into its new territory. The narrator should select a monster-class beast. Once during the next adventure when a character is in the beast's territory, it will attempt to ambush the character. For 2 Threat, the beast may be increased to villain-class instead or an additional monster-class beast of the same type may be added.

A GREAT FIND

Scientists or scholars discover a new ruin, strange landmark, or other important discovery nearby. If investigated this discovery reveals some ancient secret or hidden truth about Barsoom, but it also hints at perils to come. Any successful tests to investigate this new discovery generate 1 additional Momentum that can be used to answer questions about the discovery. However, hidden forces surrounding the discovery add 2 Threat to the Threat pool.

WAR LOOMS

An active conflict between two nearby kingdoms or groups is brewing. The overall tension raises the difficulty of social interactions with enemy-aligned characters by 1. In addition, if the heroes do not manage to resolve the growing conflict through their adventures, it will turn into a full-scale conflict in the future. The exact timeline for this war is left up to the narrator, but it should occur within a few game sessions.

DISASTER

A disaster, natural or otherwise, occurs in the area. This could be a marsquake, a science experiment gone horribly wrong, or a calamity caused by an ancient device malfunctioning. In addition to the obvious devastation, travel becomes perilous. Terrain-based difficulties on tests are increased by 1 and any dangers encountered inflict +1🎲 damage. The effects of the disaster eventually diminish, though the loss of life and destruction of property remains.

CELEBRATION

A great celebration is occurring in the region. This may mark a royal wedding, a peace treaty, a great discovery, or any number of other fortuitous events. With so much revelry and visits from important dignitaries and other characters, great attention is paid to memorable acts of heroism or ingenuity. Unfortunately, such times also invite plots, assassinations, and kidnappings. Any renown gained for actions during the celebration is increased by 2, but while the celebration occurs the Threat pool is increased by 2 as well.

A GREAT CHALLENGE

Someone important in the region, either a player hero or another character, is the subject of a challenge. This challenge may take many forms: a duel, accusations of dishonorable conduct, or evidence disputing a character's deeds or history. This challenge must be answered at some point in the coming sessions. Otherwise, the challenger will continue to make things difficult for the character and their allies. Player heroes under an unanswered challenge can acquire but cannot spend renown, while narrator characters suffer setbacks and difficulties as appropriate.

STRANGERS FROM AFAR

One or more strange visitors are seen in the area. These people may be from another kingdom, culture, or perhaps even another world. They are the subject of both curiosity and deep suspicion, and the sightings have made people paranoid and overcautious. Any character who is obviously an outsider or behaves suspiciously has the difficulty of any tests relating to securing trust or support increased by 1. Narrators should also consider who these individuals are and what they want — are they friend or foe? Invaders or allies?

WORLD EVENTS

Events of this type take place much less often and may not even be local to the players' heroes and the regions they normally frequent. These events usually take place no more than once a year and carry long-term ramifications and effects. Such incidents don't directly affect the Threat pool or other mechanics automatically, but narrators can use them for campaign and adventure ideas and when necessary they may alter the difficulties and Threat available in specific situations.

D20	WORLD EVENT
01-02	A Distant War
03–04	Death of a Great Leader
05	Global Catastrophe
06	An Epidemic
07–08	A New Power Emerges
09–10	An Enemy Returns
11	A Threat from Beyond
12–13	A Great Union
14–15	A Grand Invention
16–17	An Undiscovered Country
18–19	Regional Calamity, roll on Regional Event table
20	Roll Twice and Combine

A DISTANT WAR

Two kingdoms far from the player heroes go to war. This has no immediate effect locally, though envoys from both kingdoms may soon seek allies, weapons, and assistance in their conflict.

DEATH OF A GREAT LEADER

An important jeddak or other leader has perished. The cause may be natural or otherwise, but their death creates a power struggle in their kingdom or culture. This is a time of great opportunity and strife for those who lived under the departed ruler. Note that great doesn't mean "good"; this event could just as easily signal the death of a tyrant.

GLOBAL CATASTROPHE

Some great ruin or calamity threatens all of Barsoom. This may be something centered on Barsoom, like the failure of the atmosphere plant, or the threat may come from outside the planet, such as a possible asteroid or comet strike. There should always be a way to prevent this catastrophe, though usually at great sacrifice.

AN EPIDEMIC

Though the Martians are generally amazingly healthy, there is always the possibility of some ancient disease or bioweapon surfacing to menace the populace. This result could also describe an environmental catastrophe that weakens the population of Mars, such as a famine or poisoning of food supplies.

A NEW POWER EMERGES

A new kingdom or powerful faction arises on Barsoom. This group did not previously exist, though they may be connected to an established kingdom, culture, or other institution. From cults to new city-states, these developments carry the possibility of great change.

AN ENEMY RETURNS

An enemy or powerful adversary thought long defeated rises again. This may be a literal resurrection through forbidden science, or a metaphorical one with the successor to a previous threat rising to take its place. Note that such threats are not always known to most on Barsoom until they return — an ancient foe from the days of blue seas and green plains on Mars that none alive remember could still return to threaten the planet.

A THREAT FROM BEYOND

Some force from beyond the normal confines of Barsoom arrives to menace the planet. This may be a force from outside the world, hailing from the nearby moons or another world. It could also be a threat from a hidden place on or under Barsoom — an invading force of First Born would certainly qualify during this era.

A GREAT UNION

Whether by diplomacy or force of arms, two or more lesser powers on Barsoom ally to form a new greater one. This may reflect an alliance between two great nations, a cabal of scientists working to transform the world with amazing technology, or numerous other endeavors.

A GRAND INVENTION

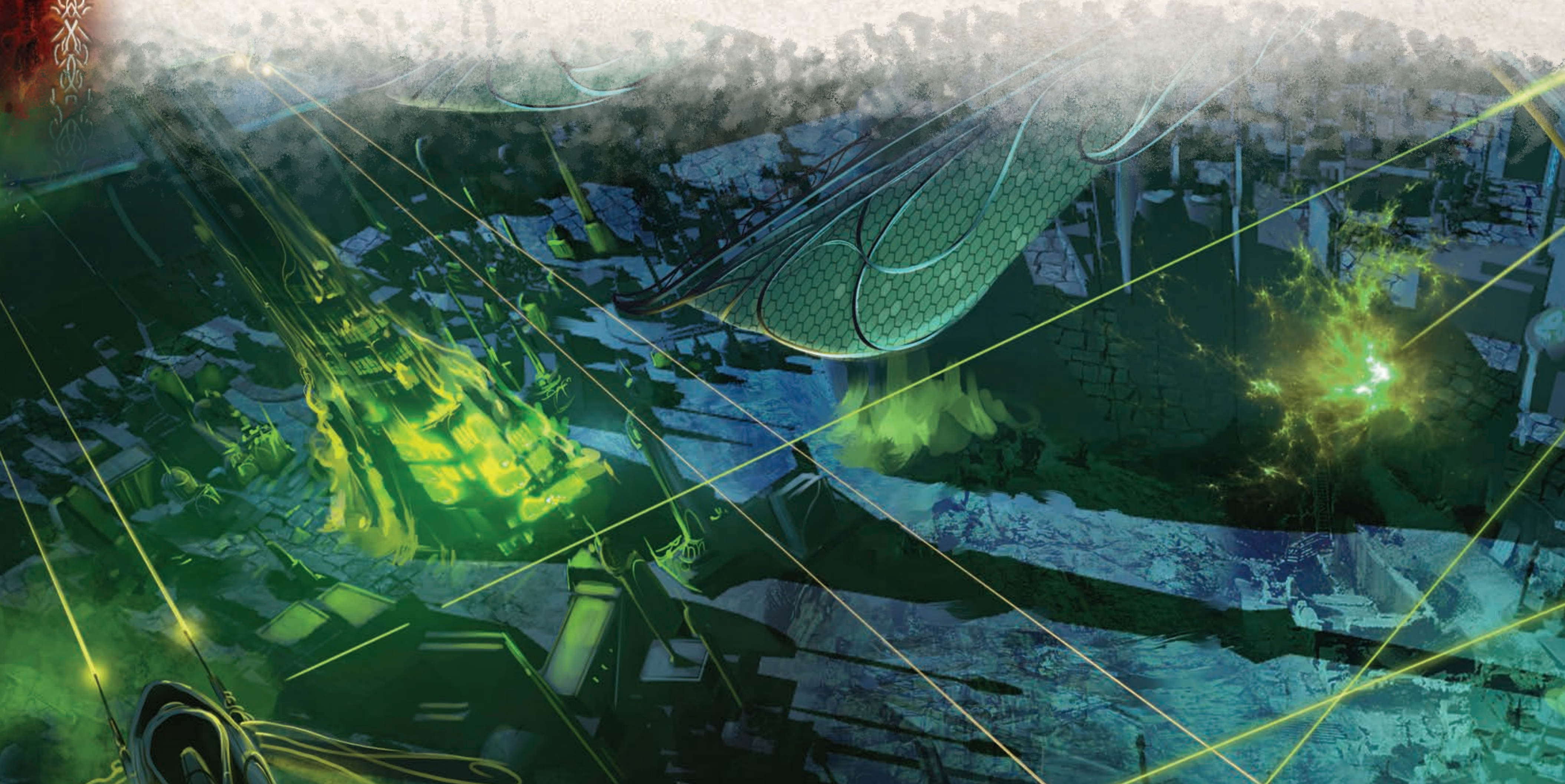
Some new or rediscovered technological development surfaces on Barsoom. This may be a wholly new invention or some significant improvement to an existing device or technology. For example, a healing salve that can regrow limbs would be an improvement of already potent Barsoomian medicine, while an extradimensional portal would be a new discovery previously unknown. Not all inventions need be dramatic or widespread, but all should be noteworthy.

AN UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

Some new region of Barsoom previously unknown or largely hidden from outsiders is found. This new land could be a subterranean cavern or a lost city, but in any event it surely holds strange wonders and likely new threats for any who dare to explore.

REGIONAL CALAMITY

Something occurring in a region of Barsoom erupts into an event of global significance. A border skirmish might spark a large-scale war once both sides' allies are brought into conflict, or an entire army of raiders and pirates may rise to plague the airways. Regional calamities often still begin small, but they quickly spiral out of control.



AIRSHIPS OF MARS

> *Each carried a strange banner swung from stem to stern above the upper works, and upon the prow of each was painted some odd device that gleamed in the sunlight and showed plainly even at the distance at which we were from the vessels. I could see figures crowding the forward decks and upper works of the air craft.*
>
> – John Carter, *A Princess of Mars*

Airships are one of the most visually and conceptually dynamic parts of Barsoom. Flying over the vast landscape, they are the primary form of conveyance for many and easily the fastest way to move across long distances.

In the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook, airships and their operation are discussed, but the rules for them are kept simple and attached to general test resolution. Wish to fly an airship? Make a skill test. Want to damage one? Have the narrator set a difficulty to do so with an attack or other action. This system is intentionally simple and direct. However, some players and narrators may wish for mechanically heftier and more nuanced rules for airships, airship concepts, and even a system for designing their own ships. That is where this chapter comes in.

The following chapter is divided into three sections. First are the rules on operating airships. Next comes a look at airship attributes and other play elements, including how to build and design your own. Finally comes a set of examples and descriptions of airships found in Barsoom, from personal fliers to massive battleships.

These rules expand on the simplified airship rules in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook in *Chapter 5: Weapons, Technology, and Equipment.*

ON AIRSHIP OPERATION

Before delving into mechanics for airships in John Carter, it's worth reviewing how they operate generally. Airships in Barsoom are held aloft by tanks containing eighth ray energies, and a simple altimeter system allows ships to set elevation and direction with ease.

Where the eighth ray tanks provide lift, radium-powered propellers provide thrust. Prior to the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, the fastest fliers could reach speeds of eleven hundred haads per zode, or about one hundred and sixty-six miles per hour. During the Jeddak of Jeddaks period, further developments in airship and motor design doubled this speed. First designed and implemented in Helium, this design was eventually emulated and used across Barsoom with varying levels of success. These later-era motors are largely magnetic in operation, removing their need for traditional radium fuel.

Speed and maneuverability of airships is largely dependent on the ratio of size, weight, and lift. A small craft with decent lift tanks can travel very fast, while a larger ship will travel considerably slower. Military vessels and those built for speed sport additional eighth ray tanks, reducing the relative weight of the vessel and allowing them to reach higher speeds.

AIRSHIP ARMAMENT

While smaller fliers and most civilian craft are unarmed, military vessels carry armaments much like Earth warships do. Guns are broken down into small rapid-fire guns and larger radium cannons, and ships also employ bombs.

Mechanically these weapons are treated in largely the same way that ***John Carter of Mars*** treats most personal weaponry. However, narrators should feel free to describe attacks to highlight the various types of weapon, much as they would describe a sword blow differently than a pistol shot, even when they do the same damage.

SHIP OPERATIONS AND BURROUGHS' CANON

Burroughs never delved into the finer points of airship operation, instead focusing on Carter and his adventures in a grander sense. As such, the following information about ship roles and positions is gleaned from the Barsoom novels mixed with Earth watercraft operations and a fair amount of speculation.

Ship Attributes

All ships have certain attributes representing how strong, fast, maneuverable, and durable they are. These attributes operate in much the same way as character attributes. The use of these attributes is discussed in more detail later, but they are presented in brief here as they are referenced frequently throughout the chapter.

The ship attributes are:

- **Controls:** How maneuverable the ship is based on its general design and altimeter and steering design.
- **Crew:** The size and skill of the crew onboard. Also represents crew training and experience. Small craft have no Crew attribute.
- **Engines:** How powerful and efficient the ship's motors are, combined with the strength of the eighth ray lift tanks.
- **Hull:** How durable and well designed the ship's hull and internal structures are.
- **Systems**: A catch-all for all other vital systems on the ship, such as navigation controls, damage control, and the like.

Armor

In addition to their attributes, some ships have Armor. This is a special trait that reduces stress inflicted on the ship. Each rank of Armor reduces the stress from a particular attack by 1. Armor may be reduced by severe damage or rendered less effective by a complication, but otherwise it applies to every attack suffered by the ship.

Example: *A heavy Zodangan cruiser with an Armor of 2 is struck by a cannon attack inflicting 4 points of stress. The ship's Armor reduces the attack by 2, one for each rank of Armor, leaving 2 stress inflicted on the ship. Later in the battle, the ship is struck twice more, inflicting 2 stress for the first attack and 6 for the second. Again, the Armor applies to each attack, reducing the stress inflicted each time by 2. Thus, after Armor, these attacks do 0 stress and 4 stress respectively.*

Rules of Engagement

General airship operation is straightforward: if a character reasonably has the skill to pilot an airship and conditions are normal, they get to where they are going with no issues or problems. This is by far the most common occurrence, so common it often passes by without comment. Whenever a narrator says, "You fly from Helium to Lesser Helium, landing near the city center," or, "Your airship makes the journey in a few days," this is what happens. There is no need for additional rules or dice rolling in these cases; everything is working as intended.

The challenge and problems arise when things don't go smoothly. Bad weather, mechanical malfunction, pirates, enemy airships, and countless other dangers can disrupt a simple flight. This is when you need the rules covered in this section.

Ship Tests

Ships and their crew often need to make tests to avoid hazards, navigate rough weather, and overcome other dangerous or dramatic situations. These are performed the same way as other skill tests with one exception: instead of using two attributes from the character, the test uses one character attribute and one ship attribute combined. Otherwise the test is performed as normal.

Example: *Zala Zors is attempting to steer the heroes' airship through a narrow fog-covered canyon. The narrator decides this is an Average (D1) test using Zala's Daring and the airship's Controls attribute. Zala's Daring is 7, while the ship has Controls 5. Zala's player generates 2 successes with her* ***Daring + Controls*** *roll, not only skillfully navigating the canyon but also generating 1 Momentum.*

The different types of ship tests are detailed in this section, along with the ship attributes used for each. The most common character attribute used in these tests is also given, though like other tests this can change based on the exact method and approach a character takes when making the test.

Simply put, a ship-based action is any action that uses a ship attribute and character attribute in combination. Need to use **Might + Controls** to muscle a damaged ship into levelling out before it crashes? Want to intimidate an enemy force with your battleship? You could use **Passion + Hull** to achieve this. Narrators and players should be creative and flexible with combining ship and character attributes — as long as it makes sense and is interesting, it should be fine.

However, there are certain tests that occur regularly when characters are steering, commanding, or otherwise operating an airship. The actions described in this setting are suggestions; the attributes used, difficulties, and other mechanical elements can be adjusted as desired by narrators.

Command Tests (Special)

Command tests don't directly use the ship's systems but they do affect its operation and so are mentioned here. Command tests are used to motivate and direct the ship's crew and officers, providing bonus Momentum to other actions. Command tests are also sometimes necessary to maintain morale. These tests use the attributes of the character performing the test, often **Passion + Reason**, though other combinations are also used depending on the exact circumstances. This test is usually of Average (D1) difficulty, but the difficulty may be raised by difficult conditions or situational modifiers.

Mechanically, command tests work just like rendering assistance or teamwork (see ***John Carter of Mars****, Chapter 4: Adventuring in Barsoom, Teamwork and Assistance*). Command tests that are used to provide Momentum for other tests require giving orders that are followed, and that the advice or command is useful. This could be as simple as calming a nervous crew and reminding them they know how to do their jobs or as complex as suggesting specific ploys and tactics to follow, but it needs to be some useful action.

Gunnery Tests (Cunning + Systems)

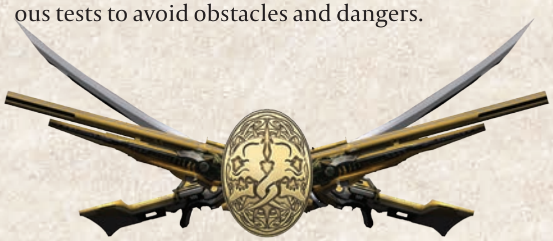
Airships with their own weapons usually employ them in ship conflict, which has its own rules discussed later. However, there may be times when a ship wishes to use its weapons on a stationary target or for some other purpose. During this time, a gunnery test would be called for. Gunnery tests are usually opposed tests and Conflict actions, though shooting an obstruction in a ship's path or using the guns to solve some problems creatively could result in making such tests outside of a conflict.

Navigation Tests (Reason + Systems)

Navigation tests are required to plot safe and effective courses for the ship, find pathways through and around storms and other airborne obstacles, and assist the pilot in moving the ship quickly, efficiently, and safely. Navigation tests are usually Conflict actions to overcome obstacles and other problems, though they may also be used to provide teamwork and assistance to other characters by providing accurate and useful paths and trajectories.

Piloting Tests (Daring + Controls)

The most basic problem during airship operation involves the piloting test. Bad weather, sudden obstacles, distant enemies attempting to close for combat, and other problems all require the ship's pilot to succeed in a test or series of tests to resolve the situation. Piloting tests are using for everything from defending in ship-to-ship conflicts, to opposed tests to catch or flee another ship, to various tests to avoid obstacles and dangers.



Repair Tests (Reason + Crew)

Another common problem requiring mechanics — figuratively and literally — is equipment failure or damage. Repair tests are performed to fix direct damage to a ship from combat, collision, or some other force, or to restore malfunctioning systems that hinder operation. The specifics on repairing ships are covered later, but for now understand that repair tests usually use **Reason** + **Crew** to direct and perform repairs.

Stability Tests (Daring + Hull)

Stability tests are called for when the ship's integrity is in question. Trying to weather a terrible storm, resist a harmful environmental effect, or otherwise have the ship "hold together" under duress calls for such tests. Stability tests may also be used to lessen damage from a crash or some onboard calamity such as a fire or explosion. Stability tests are uncommon, but are important to note because they often appear at dramatic moments during play when a particular danger, complication, or other event puts the whole ship in peril.

Other Tests

Sometimes things happen on an airship that are outside its normal operation. An epidemic might break out, requiring medical care for the crew. Morale might fall, creating the possibility of mutiny. Any number of situations can arise, and generally they are treated as they would be if they occurred off a ship. The narrator assesses the situation, players determine what their characters do in response, and any relevant tests are performed.

Generally these sorts of problems require no special rules simply because they happen on a ship. However, narrators should consider how the ship affects difficulty and creates possible complications. Perhaps a mutinous crew member might sabotage a ship system as a complication on a test to restore morale, or maybe the ship's tight quarters make resisting and curing a disease more difficult.

Ship Movement

Out of conflict, ships move easily and largely at the "speed of plot." They reach their destinations faster than foot travel, thoat, and other ground transportation. Those wishing their ships to make better time can push the engines with a **Reason** + **Engines** (D2) test. Success cuts travel time, and extra Momentum can be spent to push things even further. The more Momentum spent, the faster the ship arrives at its destination…

Ship Range

Sometimes, especially during ship conflicts, it is important to know how far ships are from each other, as well as how far they are from characters and structures. Like other conflicts in ***John Carter***, ship ranges are abstracted and describe how far the ship is from something in relative terms instead of exact distances. The ranges for ships are as follows.

- **Reach.** Ships are touching or nearly so. Crew from either can attempt to board the opposing vessel to engage the enemy. Only character weapons and ship's weapons especially designed for use while boarding can be fired at this range.
- **Close.** Ships are close enough for pistols, bows, and ship weapons to be fired at the ship and crew on deck.
- **Away.** Ships are at optimum range for most attacks, though pistols and other shorter-range personal weapons have +1 difficulty to hit.
- **Far.** Ships can fire their weapons at each other freely, though with +1 difficulty due to range. Characters can fire rifles at the ship and crew on deck, but pistols and other shorter ranged weapons are out of range.
- **Too Far.** Ships can be seen but not otherwise engaged with. If a ship that is Too Far moves again out of range, it leaves the encounter.

Optional rule:
Ship Positions

On smaller airships and personal fliers, characters can switch between roles and functions with ease, jumping from piloting to navigation or some other task. However, with larger vessels requiring multiple operators it may stretch credibility that even great heroes can jump between stations on a massive warship automatically. If this is a problem for a group, the narrator can require ships of Capable or larger size to have assigned positions. These positions are responsible for different aspects of ship operation and combat.

PILOT

The pilot steers the ship, guiding it through combat and hazards safely. In small vessels the pilot is often also the navigator, captain, or both.

NAVIGATOR

The navigator is responsible for maintaining charts and maps, and plotting courses for the ship over long voyages and through storms and past other obstacles. On smaller ships, this role may be filled by the captain or pilot.

CAPTAIN

The ship's captain oversees the overall operation of the ship. During combat or other tense situations, their primary role is to make command tests to aid crew in other positions in performing their duties. The captain is usually the highest-ranking officer or noble present, though a lower-ranked individual with sufficient experience is sometimes given the role.

GUNNER

If the ship has onboard weapons, the gunner is in charge of their operation, loading, and maintenance. Small or unarmed ships either have no gunner or another crewmember shares that duty. Large ships may have multiple gunners, each in charge of a battery of weapons.

ENGINEER

The ship's engineer oversees engine operation and repairs. They make sure the eighth ray generation and other propulsion and lift systems of the airship work properly, as well as monitoring and fixing all other major systems with the help of technicians and other crew. On small ships there is no engineer and the ship must usually be stopped so the pilot can attempt repairs.

OTHER POSITIONS

Some very large airships may have additional positions. These are generally important to specific operations of the airship, but don't impact most of the mechanics in this chapter. For example, a ship's healer is important for treating illness and injury, but their actions rarely involve ship attributes directly.

Positions are totally optional. They may reduce the free-wheeling pulp feel of ***John Carter***, and thus should only be used by groups desiring increased focus on ship command and function.

Note that ship ranges and character ranges are described in the same way but they are still relative. If desired, a narrator may at times determine that the range between two characters on two different ships is greater than the range between the two ships themselves to keep the ranges relative. This can become confusing, however, and should be avoided if narrators and players find this hard to track.

Elevation and Ship Range

As ship range is relative to ships, characters, and landmarks it takes elevation into account. A ship that is Far above another but positioned directly over it isn't in Reach range, despite appearances on a two-dimensional representation of their positions. Likewise, a cannon on the ground might find a passing ship is at least Away if not Far or Too Far as it passes high overhead. Being able to use elevation effectively is a major advantage in air combat, and narrators should remember that the skies of Barsoom are not flat two-dimensional planes.

Narrators wishing to track elevation, especially when using two-dimensional maps, may wish to use markers or other methods of noting a ship's elevation to aid in tracking vertical ranges. It may be useful to break elevations into zones to help determine which ships are above, below, or level with other fliers.

Movement and Range Zones

Unless a group is using a map or tiles to portray ship movement and conflict, it is usually sufficient to record where each ship and important landmark is relative to each other in terms of range. Essentially each ship is surrounded by concentric zones representing each range. Anything within a certain range rests inside one of these zones. Naturally ships are in the same zone as each other — if you are in Close range of an enemy frigate then they are in Close range of you as well.

Using a representation of a ship and the range zones around it is an easy way to track where things are in a scene. It's still somewhat abstract, but it allows players and narrators to understand, relatively speaking, where everyone is.

USING TILES AND MAPS

It is often helpful, but not required, to use map tiles or even a large open tabletop space to track ship movement. In this case, narrators can either mark set distances away as being in certain ranges or note spaces or tiles on the map as representing the different ranges.

The exact distances on a map for ship ranges depend on the size of the map and miniatures or markers representing the ships. Large maps covering a whole table may mark Close range as several feet away and Far on the opposite end of the map. A small map sketched on a piece of note paper may mark Close range a few inches away. The exact measures used are less important than the fact that everyone using it clearly understands the movement and ranges involved.

CHASING AND PURSUING

Often during a conflict a ship wishes to close or increase the distance between them and another ship or flying creature. To accomplish this the pilots of both ships make opposed tests. The tests are performed by whichever character is flying the ship, though other characters acting as navigators or engineers may aid them by performing actions such as plotting effective courses or pushing the engines to provide more power (see ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook, *Chapter 4: Adventuring in Barsoom*). If a character assisting fails their test to render assistance, they increase the difficulty of the pilot's test by 1.

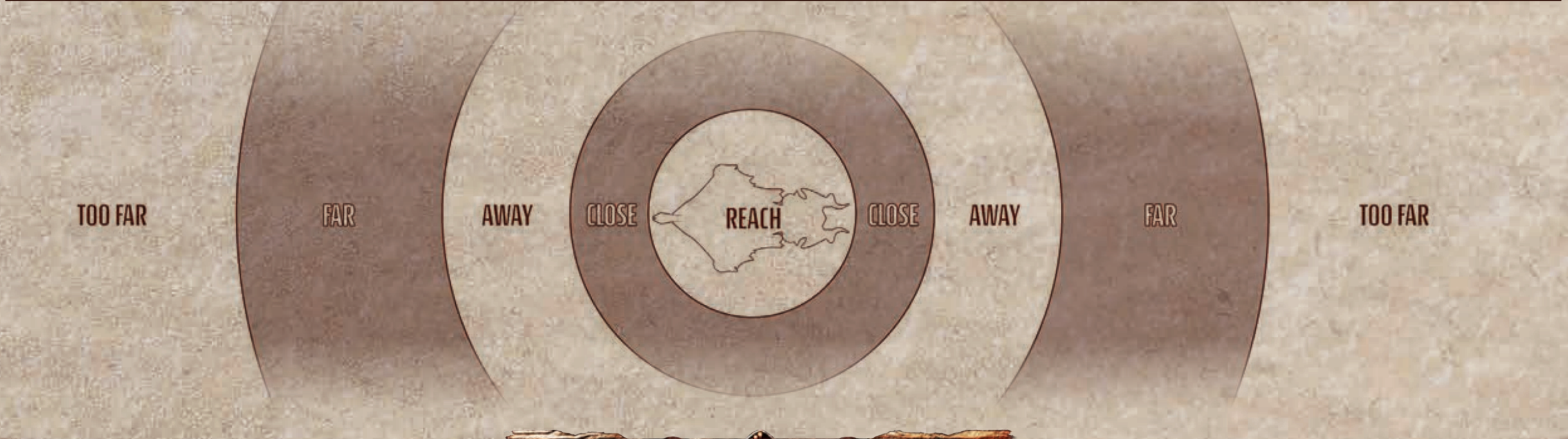
To engage in a chase, each character piloting a ship makes an Average (D1) test, usually using **Daring + Controls**, with other characters assisting if desired. Success means the ship can move one range increment in either direction from the other ship. For 2 additional Momentum, they can move an additional range increment. Complications on this test represent obstacles and problems which make pursuit or escape more dramatic and difficult. Difficulty for these tests may be increased due to weather, obstacles, and other environmental factors as the narrator decides.

Example: *The heroes' ship is being pursued by a dreadnaught belonging to a mad jeddak whose plans they recently thwarted. Unable to fight the massive warship in their scout flier, the heroes seek to escape the battle. This results in a chase, with the pilot of each ship rolling a* ***Daring + Controls*** *test and both the dreadnaught's engineer and the scout ship's co-pilot attempting* ***Cunning + Engines*** *to assist. All of these are Average (D1) tests. At the start of this Chase, the ships begin at Far range.*

Both ships roll the dice for their tests. On the scout flier, the co-pilot scores 2 successes, meeting the difficulty plus an additional 1 success that becomes 1 Momentum for the pilot. On the dreadnaught, the engineer fails the test, increasing the ship's pilot test by 1 to D2. Then both pilots make their ***Daring + Controls*** *test; the scout ship pilot gets 3 overall successes and the dreadnaught pilot manages only 2 due to the increased difficulty from the engineer's failure. Comparing the successes, the scout wins by 1 success and can move their ship one range increment closer to or farther away from the dreadnaught. Seeking to escape the heavily-armed warship, the pilot moves from Far range to Too Far. The ships are still in a chase, but the dreadnaught cannot fire its weapons at the smaller ship, and should the scout succeed on another test before the dreadnaught does it will escape!*

Airship chases can be very dramatic, especially since there are two rolls on each side of a test, increasing the chances for interesting complications. Narrators can allow command tests or other types of assistance to add further Momentum, but only if the character has useful advice or knowledge of how to escape or close the distance during the chase — simply yelling "Faster!" won't do it.

EXAMPLE SHIP RANGES



SHIP CONFLICT

Ship-to-ship conflicts work like character conflicts in many ways, but there are some key differences. These differences are detailed in this section. Otherwise, run ship-versus-ship conflicts like other conflicts, with turns, tests, damage, and other mechanics as needed.

SHIP CONFLICT TURNS

Ship conflicts are run the same as other conflicts. Each player gets their own action, with narrator characters generally going after unless they interrupt or circumstances dictate they should go before a player character.

SHIP ACTIONS

During each ship conflict turn, the ship may perform a movement action. In addition, each player hero or other significant character may perform ship-based actions as their action for the turn. Here are some possible actions.

- Make command and other tests to provide assistance and teamwork to others. If successful they can grant earned Momentum to another crew member who follows their orders. This is done before other actions.
- Attempt a repair test, trying to fix damage or remove mechanical-based complications.
- Attack any target in range. This may be performed by one character per ship's weapon.
- Make navigation tests to plot new courses or exploit the environment in useful ways, such as analyzing an enemy's course to better predict its exact position. This often takes the form of assistance or teamwork actions that aid the character piloting the ship or firing its guns.

These are just a few examples of what characters can do on board a ship during a conflict. Narrators are encouraged to let players be creative with actions and keep things moving.

These rules are designed to give characters aboard a ship something interesting and useful to do during ship conflict without restricting their actions to specific roles or requirements. If a ship is not crewed by player heroes or important narrator characters, narrators should assume that most actions the ship takes are effective but not exceptional, focusing only on tests that affect a conflict or scene, such as chasing another ship, shooting cannons, and other such dynamic and exciting actions.

At minimum, even a ship crewed by faceless minions can move and perform a single conflict action for each weapon it has in a turn. Also, larger ships are presumed to have a narrator character who can assume basic duties in case a character in a crew position is unavailable or disabled. These backup crew are assumed to have modest attributes relevant to their positions: 6 for well-trained crew, 5 for normal crew, and 4 for rookies and trainees. So even if a ship only has one or two important crew present, they will still be able to perform any relevant actions as needed.

Example: *The captain of the frigate* The Glory of Helium *finds his ship in conflict with an enemy vessel. The captain and his chief pilot are both player heroes, while the engineer is an important narrator character. During the coming conflict, the narrator focuses on the captain's command tests and the pilot's tests to pilot the ship. When the captain calls for the enemy to be fired upon or a new course to be plotted, the relevant tests are made by the narrator using a default attribute of 6 to represent the well-trained crew. Otherwise, the action focuses on the captain and pilot, the two important characters present.*

Though the ship conflict rules can be used to simulate conflicts between ships where no important characters are involved, narrators are encouraged to avoid doing so unless they allow the players to temporarily assume the role of crew on one or both ships. If the players are not involved, it's best to simply narrate the results of a conflict and move on. In the previous example, if the captain and pilot were not player heroes? The narrator could have simply described the results of the conflict to the players and moved on to scenes where they were directly involved.

BOARDING

Characters on a ship can attempt to board another when the two vessels are in Reach. The characters make a **Daring + Might** (D2) roll to leap, swing, grapple, or otherwise travel to the other ship. Success places them on the nearest point from their previous position on the enemy ship. Talents that allow characters to automatically move between ranges can be used to board a ship without the need for a test. Once on board they can attempt to attack the ship's inhabitants, damage or sabotage controls, and do whatever else seems reasonable given their capabilities and location on the boarded vessel.

Run boarding actions as a series of short conflicts with the player heroes and any allies against a small group of the enemy's officers and crew. The loser of each conflict during a boarding reduces their Crew attribute by 1 to reflect losses and damage. Narrators can increase this loss of Crew if a battle is exceptionally brutal or dramatic. After each conflict either side may surrender and the attacker may retreat back to their ship if all their boarders have not been captured or killed.

Example: *During an air battle, the player heroes' ship boards an enemy vessel. The narrator runs a short conflict between the heroes boarding the ship and the enemy crew on deck. The heroes win this conflict and the ship's Crew is reduced by 1. Neither side surrenders and the attackers press on. The narrator runs another conflict for the boarding and the player heroes meet heavy resistance and lose the next conflict as they push below decks. The attacking ship loses 1 Crew. Fortunately, two of their number are not captured and don't black out in the battle, and they are able to drag their wounded and unconscious companions back to their ship, ending the boarding attempt.*

Defenders have an advantage during boarding conflicts as they can spend 2 Momentum to summon a force of minion-class crew to help them fight the boarders. Each 2 Momentum spent summons a number of minions equal to half the ship's current Crew attribute, rounded up. Narrators can do the same for narrator-controlled ships being boarded by spending 2 Threat. This may only be done a total number of times equal to the Crew attribute during the boarding.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE NORTH

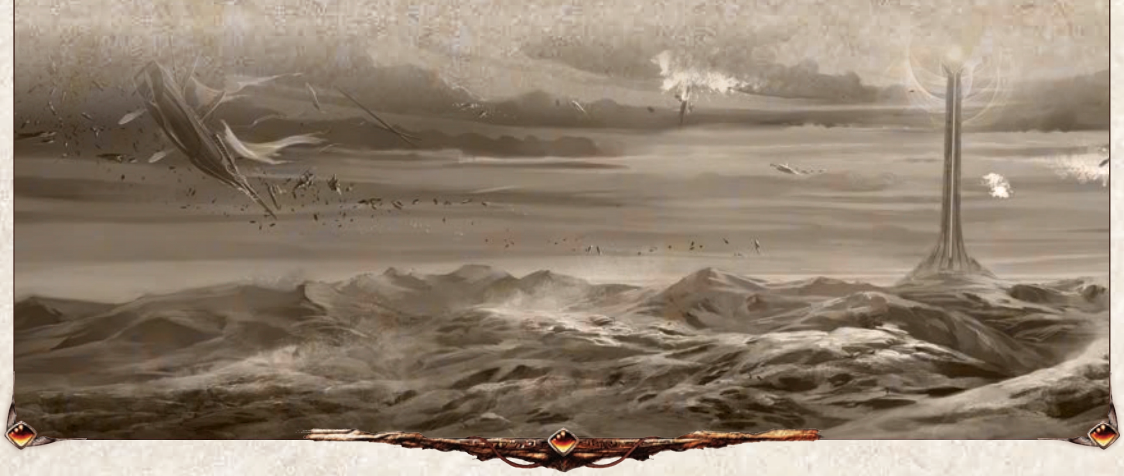
The Guardian is not a flier or an airship, but it deserves special mention here because it is the bane of all airships that dare approach this dreadful Okarian defensive weapon. A giant tower capable of generating a powerful magnetic field, when switched on the guardian destabilizes and draws in all fliers that approach it. Ships crash into each other, spin out of control into the ground, or smash on the surface of the tower. Then the Okar switch off the Guardian and send out parties to collect hostages, slaves, and other plunder from the ruins of the crashed ships.

Mechanically, any flier within Close or Reach range of the Guardian must make a **Controls + Might** (D3) test to keep their ship from spinning out of control and crashing for each turn they remain in range. Trying to retreat from Close range requires powerful engines and a steady hand, with the pilot making a joint threshold 8 challenge. The pilot will make a **Cunning + Controls** (D4) test and the engineer will make a **Daring + Engines** (D4) test to push past the field and escape. The pilot and engineer make these tests each turn until they fail twice collectively or generate the threshold in successes together.

Fliers who are Far from the Guardian when it is activated may also be pulled closer if they are unlucky or unprepared. Ships at this range must pass a **Reason + Engines** (D2) test each turn to avoid being pulled to Close range. If a ship succeeds and spends 2 additional Momentum, its crew has learned how to effectively skirt the outer range of the Guardian's pull and can stop making these tests.

The Guardian is difficult to bypass and nearly impossible to destroy, being a massive device of ancient and durable construction. The best way to avoid destroying your ship when encountering it is to either keep your distance or have someone on the inside who can fight past the Okar guards and defeat or somehow bypass the switchmaster, who is usually a very skilled duelist. Until his death at the hands of John Carter at the end of the Prince of Helium era, this position was held by the swordsmaster Solan.

Detecting the Guardian when it is turned on is nearly impossible until it is too late. The magnetic field is invisible and most Barsoom airships lack the instruments to detect the strong magnetic field. However, a navigator or other crew member can attempt a **Reason + Systems** (D4) test to spot some minuscule effect or anomaly that tells them the Guardian is active and generating a dangerously strong magnetic field.



In cases where ships board each other without player heroes, or they wish to quickly resolve the effect of boarders and defenders clashing in battle on the ship decks, narrators can simply narrate the results that make the most sense or provide the most interesting effects. In cases where the outcome is uncertain, an opposed test using the Passion of the character leading boarding actions or defense and each ship's Crew attribute can be performed, with the winner's side prevailing.

Example: *During an adventure a warship carrying the player heroes is boarded by the battleship of an enemy jeddak. Unfortunately, the player heroes are betrayed by one of their own officers during the boarding and must deal with the traitor instead of repelling the boarders — no doubt all according to the jeddak's fiendish plan. As the heroes deal with the traitor, a junior officer and trusted ally of theirs attempts to deal with the boarders. The heroes' ship has a Crew of 6 and their ally has Passion of 6, while the Jeddak commanding the boarders has Passion 5 but their crew is 9.*

The junior officer scores an impressive 3 successes using his ***Passion + Crew*** *while the jeddak scores only 2 successes. Despite superior numbers led by a formidable leader, the heroes' ally manages to win this round and fight off the boarders. At least for now.*

If the attacker wins this **Passion + Crew** Average (D1) test, they reduce the defending ship's Crew attribute by 1 and may reduce another ship attribute by 1 for each 2 Momentum spent. If the defender wins, they reduce the attacker's Crew attribute by 1. Attribute reductions last until the end of the scene. After each turn of boarding conflicts, the attacker may choose to retreat. This ends the boarding action and causes the two ships to automatically move back to Close range in the following turn.

Narrators should only use boarding actions when they affect the player heroes or other important characters in some way, even if indirectly. If a boarding conflict is background or incidental, simply narrate its effects and keep moving.

Boarding is unlikely to succeed without valiant and capable player heroes or other important characters leading them, or overwhelming numbers of attackers—, which accurately models both the Barsoom novels and other swashbuckling pulp tales. Boarding is a risky and often desperate affair, though one that can allow a handful of heroes to turn the tide of a great aerial battle.

RAMMING

A ship that closes to **within Reach** of another ship may elect to ram it during the turn it first enters this range. To make a ramming attack the pilot makes a **Cunning + Controls** test against the target pilot's **Daring + Controls** to avoid. If successful the ship deals damage to its target equal to its Hull in combat dice, but it also takes damage equal to half of its target's Hull in combat dice as well. Momentum can be spent to increase this damage normally, though for every 2 Momentum spent on damage, the ship ramming its target takes an additional +1 🎲 of damage as well. Ramming damage is Shattering and every effect rolled inflicts 1 Injury stress to the characters aboard as well as normal damage.

Example: *Desperate to destroy an enemy warship, and having lost his own guns, a heroic Helium airship officer turns his damaged scout flier on an enemy frigate and attempts to ram it. Successfully closing to Reach range, the scout pilot makes an opposed* ***Cunning + Controls*** *test versus the target's* ***Daring + Controls****. Both sides roll, with the scout managing an impressive 6 successes to the frigate's 1, 5 additional successes in all. The scout ship has a Hull of 4, doing 4 base 🎲 damage to the frigate. The scout ship suffers half the frigate's Hull of 6 in damage, or 3 🎲. The scout ship pilot puts all of its additional Momentum from the roll into bonus damage, managing an amazing 9 🎲 of damage (4 for the Hull and 5 for Momentum). However, 2 of that Momentum-based damage also harms the scout ship, representing the sheer force from the collision affecting the ship. This means the scout itself takes 5 🎲 of damage (3 from the Hull of the frigate, plus 2 for Momentum spent on ramming damage).*

Ramming damage, despite being "internal" in nature, is still reduced by armor ratings and other effects that reduce stress taken. This represents that armored or otherwise robust airships are more capable of surviving ramming attacks.

SHIP WEAPONS

Many ships have cannons, bombs, and other weapons, while others depend on the rifles and pistols of their crew. Standard ship guns deal 2 🎲 of damage and have the **Armor Piercing** quality which does an additional 1 point of damage that bypasses armor when an effect is rolled.. Some ships have more deadly weapons, and these will be noted on their individual entries. Crew-fired weapons and personal weapons fired at ships from afar inflict 1 less 🎲 of damage than usual — they are made for shooting at other characters, not vehicles.

Conversely, ship weapons inflict more damage when aimed directly at a character. A cannon built to put holes in a ship can destroy a human target or even a group of them. However, such weapons are difficult to aim at characters, being built for much larger targets. All vehicle-based weapons have a +1 difficulty to hit a character, but these weapons deal +1 🎲 of damage and the damage is treated as Explosive (1 Injury and Fear damage on an effect). Furthermore, when Momentum is spent to defeat a minion with such weapons, they defeat extra minions based on the ship's size:

- Graceful ships defeat 2 minions.
- Capable ships defeat 3 minions.
- Lumbering ships defeat 4 minions.

Additional Momentum can be spent to defeat extra minions with an attack as normal. Note that "ship weapons" means weapons scaled to ship combat and used to attack ships. While ground-based anti-ship weaponry or similar ground-based heavy weapons are largely absent in the Barsoom novels, they do exist in modest numbers to provide defense for cities and fortifications and are considered a ship weapon for purposes of these rules.

BOMBS AWAY

Some of the ships detailed have bombs among their weapons complement. Bombs are largely meant to attack stationary ground targets, where their high damage and Explosive qualities (see ***John Carter of Mars****, Chapter 5: Weapons, Technology, and Equipment*) cause terrible damage. However, it is possible to use bombs on any target below the ship, including another ship at a lower altitude or characters and vehicles moving below the ship. However, this sort of pinpoint accuracy with a dropped explosive is not easy. A bombing attack is a separate attack from those with other ship's weapons and can be performed in the same turn as other attacks provided there is a crew member free to make the attack.

NEW QUALITIES

Two new qualities are introduced in this chapter for ship combat, Armor Piercing and Shattering. Though these are explained in the text, we have placed them in the sidebar here for easy reference.

ARMOR PIERCING
Each effect rolled does an additional point of damage that ignores Armor.

SHATTERING
Each effect rolled does a point of damage to the ship as well as a point of damage to any character on board.

Trying to attack another ship or moving ground target with a bomb increases the difficulties of all tests by 1. If a target is well below the attacker — essentially at Far range — this difficulty is increased by 2.

However, even if a targeted character manages to avoid harm, narrators should note that bombs cover a large area when they strike a ground target, exploding and leveling whole settlements, killing dozens if not hundreds of people, and devastating the landscape. Even when technically ineffective, their impact can be grave and their use easily leads to other complications and dangers in many circumstances such as collateral damage, fires, and wounded civilians. Bombs and incendiaries often have the Dishonorable quality, depending on their use (see page 74, *Incendiary Combat*, in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook).

The Guns of Barsoom

Narrators wishing to give Barsoomian anti-aircraft cannons and ground artillery a larger role in their campaigns should balance the logic and utility of such weaponry with the possibility of its overuse changing the setting so it no longer resembles the source material.

While most cities logically sport some airship defenses, it is recommended that offensive use of large cannons and ground-based heavy weaponry be largely confined to enclaves of technologically superior villains, the mad war machines of a forbidden science, and other suitably pulp-inspired situations. Having some anti-aircraft guns and cannons on the walls of Helium to drive off enemy fliers makes sense, but lining every wall and tower with guns quickly disrupts the style and aesthetic of Barsoom. Remember that Burroughs began the novels before World War I and continued them through the shock of what even the machine gun — now such a common sight in modern action stories — could do to targets. Often the books themselves seem to be struggling with a mix of effective modern technology and warfare and the horrific violence they are capable of. Narrators wishing to emulate this feel should make larger weapons significant and relatively rare.

Ship Weapons and Talents

Ship weapons are generally considered their own type of weapon for weapon-based talents, though broadly applied higher-grade talents may apply to both ship and personal weapons. Thus a talent that says "all firearms" should be read as "all personal firearms" as the general understanding of the term means pistols, rifles, carbines, and other handheld ranged weapons designed for personal combat. However, a talent that says "all ranged attacks" would include a character firing a ship weapon.

Ship Armor

Some ships have Armor that reduces the damage suffered. Each rank of Armor reduces the stress taken from each attack by 1. Armor may be temporarily reduced by ship damage.

Shooting at the Crew

Crew on decks, clamoring on the outside hull, or otherwise visible can be attacked by characters with ranged weapons normally, though the difficulty for such attacks is +1 to represent the sudden movement and uncertainty of air combat. If the crew is under cover, difficulties increase by +2. Shooting at the crew with the intent to diminish the effectiveness of the ship or damage its operations — a common Thark tactic — is generally treated as a normal attack on the ship itself.

Ship Damage

Ships suffer damage much like characters, with some key differences. Ships have stress tracks like characters, but where a character would suffer an affliction, ships suffer breaches instead. A ship can take a number of breaches before it is taken out of battle, depending on the size and attributes of the vessel. Each breach also damages the ship in some unique way as determined by rolling a d20 for each breach on the **Ship Breach Table**.

DIE	BREACH
01–02	**Crew Hit.** Reduce Crew by 1.
03–04	**Engines Hit.** Reduce Engines by 1.
05–06	**Hull Cracked.** Reduce Hull by 1.
07–08	**Controls Hit.** Reduce Controls by 1.
09–10	**Systems Hit.** Reduce Systems by 1.
11–12	**Weapons Hit.** A weapon system is rendered inoperable. If there are multiple weapons, the attacker chooses one. If there are no weapons, reduce Crew by 1.
13–16	**Armor Cracked.** Reduce Armor by 1. If the ship has no Armor, reduce Hull by 1.
17–18	**Malfunction.** The ship suffers a complication in the form of a malfunction (*see Malfunctions*).
19–20	**Dreadful Impact.** All crew not strapped in or secured at their posts must pass a **Daring + Might** (D2) test. If they fail, those inside the ship take 2 🎲 of damage as they are flung about. Those on the decks or outside the hull are thrown off the ship! Heroes may spend a Luck point or 2 Momentum to avoid this for themselves or another nearby character, but they lose their next action as they hold on for dear life.

***Example:** The naval destroyer* Jeddak's Fire *has taken 2 breaches from a devastating attack. The narrator rolls a d20 for each breach, consulting the table. The results are 8 (Controls Hit) and 17 (Malfunction), resulting in a complication affecting a particular system. The narrator decides the complication also affects the Controls. Its Controls hit hard by the attack, the* Jeddak's Fire *must reduce its Controls attribute from 5 to 4 due to one breach, and all Controls tests now suffer +1 difficulty because of the other.*

After a ship suffers its last breach, is it disabled and begins to break apart, crash, or otherwise fall to pieces. Depending on the exact circumstances of the final attack that takes out the ship, the crew may or may not have time to abandon ship, but as there are generally few explosive elements on a Barsoomian airship it is common for at least some crew to find their way to safety as the ship slowly falls to its end, leaking eighth rays and breaking apart.

SHIP DAMAGE RECOVERY

A ship's stress recovers quickly after a conflict as minor repairs are made, armor is patched, and crew treated for minor injuries. This stress goes away at the end of a scene.

Breaches and their effects are a different story. To fix a breach, the ship's engineer or whoever else is overseeing the attempt to fix the breach makes a **Reason** + **Crew** (D2) test. Success removes a breach and its effects. For each 2 additional Momentum spent, an additional breach can be repaired. A complication on this roll either means the effect of the breach cannot be removed until the ship is taken back to port for overhaul, or the repair works but there is still something wrong.

Example:** After the battle where its Controls were badly damaged, the engineer and repair crew of the* Jeddak's Fire *are seeking to fix the damage. They make a* ***Reason *+* ***Crew*** *(D2) test, getting a success plus two additional Momentum but also rolling a complication. The engineer uses the 2 Momentum to repair both breaches, but the narrator informs them that despite their best efforts they could not fix the entirety of the damage to the controls. Until they can return to port or salvage parts from another ship, the* Jeddak's Fire's *Controls will remain reduced by 1.*

Breaches cannot be fixed during combat. They require time and attention outside of the rush and chaos of battle.

SHIP SIZE

Like characters, ships come in three sizes that denote how durable and important they are: Lumbering, Capable, and Graceful. These categories are equivalent to the simplified sizes for airships in the core rulebook (see ***John Carter of Mars***, *Chapter 5: Weapons, Technology, and Equipment*). All ships have a single stress track, and their size determines their maximum stress and the number of breaches a ship can suffer.

- A Lumbering ship has maximum stress equal to the sum of its Hull and Systems plus 3. It can suffer a number of breaches equal to half its highest attribute, rounded up.
- A Capable ship has a maximum stress equal to the sum of its Hull and Systems. It can suffer a number of Breaches equal to half its lowest attribute, rounded up.
- Graceful ships have a maximum stress equal to the higher of their Hull or Systems attribute. They can only suffer a single breach.

Size is used to describe a ship's physical size, but also its general maneuverability and durability compared to other vessels. Note that a ship's size isn't always a perfect analog to its role or description — an easily damaged but agile larger flier might be Graceful in size, even if it's not necessarily noticeably smaller. Narrators and players should think of size as similar to villain, monster, and minion-class characters.

WHAT ABOUT PURPOSE?

The simple rules presented for airships in ***John Carter*** (see the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook, *Chapter 5: Weapons, Technology, and Equipment*) present size but also purpose. While size is modeled and somewhat expanded here, purpose is not used directly in these rules but instead in the Ship Design rules presented shortly. This is because the function of purpose is covered across many rules presented in this section. For example, military fliers are better armed and armored, often with superior attributes to many civilian fliers. Thus the advantage provided by purpose in the core book is already included.

SHIP SIZE ADVANTAGES

Bigger, tougher ships are also slower and heavier. They also tend to carry more cargo and passengers and can survive more damage.

- If trying to flee or outmaneuver a larger ship, the smaller ship gets 1 bonus Momentum if it is one size smaller (Graceful versus Capable, Capable versus Lumbering) and 3 bonus Momentum if it is two sizes smaller (Graceful versus Lumbering). This bonus applies when trying to avoid being targeted by a larger ship's weapons as well.
- Attacks by larger ships are more effective when they manage to hit. A ship one size category larger (Capable versus Graceful, Lumbering versus Capable), grants 1 bonus Momentum to successful attack. A ship two categories larger (Lumbering versus Graceful), grants 3 bonus Momentum for a successful attack.
- Ships hit by attacks from smaller ships or by characters gain 1 additional armor for every size above their attacker, making larger ships harder to damage with the guns of their smaller counterparts.

Graceful ships also often lack the Crew attribute of their larger cousins. A Graceful ship has one or two crew members who serve as pilot, engineer, gunner, and any other roles required. Instead of Crew attributes, the character uses one of their own attributes for ship-related tests. This means that when the Crew attribute would normally be affected or reduced, the character takes damage instead.

Can't Hit the Broad Side of a Battlecruiser

Astute readers may note that Graceful attackers don't get a bonus to hit a larger ship and in fact take a penalty. At first glance, this may seem comically inappropriate, with skilled sharpshooters being no more able to strike a massive battleship with their guns than they could a human sized target. However, the reason for this is that tests to attack a target measure whether an attacker can land a successful attack, not just whether they can physically hit their target.

So a character who shoots at a battleship and fails to score any successes on their attack didn't necessarily miss the ship; their attack just doesn't have any chance of doing damage. It might have ricocheted off the ship's armor or impacted harmlessly against a thick bulkhead. Sure, the shot may also have missed the ship completely, but in most cases personal firearms that fail to successfully attack a larger ship hit, they just didn't do enough to merit generating Momentum or rolling damage.

Narrators should keep this consideration firmly in mind when describing the effects of tests in a ship conflict, avoiding discouraging descriptions of expert marksmen missing multiple shots on ships the size of a building.

Characters and Ship Combat

Characters at times come into direct conflict with ships. When attacking Graceful ships, no modifications are made. These ships are small and fragile enough they can be brought down by well-placed small arms fire, and maneuverable enough to bring their weapons to bear on human-sized targets.

Capable and Lumbering ships are another matter. Capable ships attempting to attack a character or otherwise engage with them in ways where their size would be a hindrance — such as following them into a tight space — gain +1 difficulty on all such tests. This same difficulty modifier applies to character-sized attackers using non-vehicle weaponry to attack the ship. Lumbering ships have an even harder time attacking character-sized targets and yet are harder to damage with small arms, increasing the difficulties described above by 2.

Note that these modifiers don't apply to characters attempting to outrun ships, evade their attacks, or avoid them by going places ships cannot easily follow. In fact, airships travel so much faster than characters that any attempt to outrun an airship on foot doesn't even require the dice to resolve; it automatically fails.

Ship Hazards

Not all problems with a ship occur directly during a conflict. Sometimes an environmental hazard or other problem can be at least as dangerous to the ship and its crew as an enemy cannon.

Ship Obstacles, Hindrances and Dangers

Ships can suffer obstacles, hindrances, and dangers just like characters. These hazards often limit ship travel or operations in some way. Narrators should use them to make travel more dramatic and interesting, especially when ships venture into unknown or dangerous territory.

Ship obstacles and hindrances are often weather-related, though particularly dangerous geological or technological phenomena may also qualify. A strange mist that interferes with eighth ray generation and function could be an obstacle to entering or leaving an area, while a terrible storm could easily serve as a hindrance to ship-based tests while trapped within it.

Danger can be inside or outside a ship, with fires, dangerous weather, and numerous other problems arising to damage either the ship or its inhabitants. They are created and dealt with the same as character-based dangers, with the narrator spending Threat to create a danger which carries both a difficulty to avoid and damage it will inflict if the ship fails to avoid it.

Example: *The* Jeddak's Fire *encounters a strange storm that shoots deadly blasts of red lightning at any vessel that is caught within its deep violet clouds. The narrator informs the ship's crew that riding out the storm is a Challenging (D2) test with a danger of 3 using the* Jeddak's Fire*'s Hull and the pilot's Daring, which represents turning the ship to deflect or skirt the most dangerous parts of the storm and allowing the sturdiest parts of the ship to absorb the damage harmlessly. The ship's pilot rolls 1 success, not enough to avoid damage. The ship takes 3 ⬢ of damage from the storm…*

Malfunctions

Everything from aging components to outright sabotage can cause an airship to malfunction, requiring repairs. These malfunctions are complications, often created by the narrator spending Threat or as a side effect of a ship-based action. Malfunctions can occur outside of conflicts, though ship breaches may cause them as well.

Malfunctions generally start and grow as additional complications occur or are created. Most initial malfunctions increase the difficulty of a specific ship operation by 1, such as piloting or navigation. Additional complications increase these problems, with more systems affected or one system rendered completely inoperative until serious or costly repairs are performed.

Example: *The* Jeddak's Fire *is struck by an enemy cannon and the damage causes a malfunction. This creates a complication for the ship and its crew. The narrator decides the ship's targeting system has been severely damaged by the attack. Until it is repaired, all gunnery-based tests suffer +1 difficulty.*

Later, before the ship can be repaired, a fire breaks out on deck — the result of a saboteur hidden among the crew. Dealing with the fire causes another complication. The narrator decides that the already-damaged targeting system is destroyed by the fire. This raises the difficulty for all gunner-based tests by 2 until the system can be replaced in a port with the proper tools and parts

AIRSHIP CREATION AND DESIGN

While ready-made airships, including some speculative craft not found in Burroughs' work, are found in the next section, players and narrators may wish to design their own ships. This section gives quick, easy, yet comprehensive rules for doing just that.

STEP ZERO: SHIP NAMES AND CONCEPT

Before creating a ship using the ship design rules, players and narrators should have a basic concept for their airships. Is this a fast, personal flier or a large transport? What will it be used for in play? Where was it built and why? Will it have weapons or any noteworthy abilities? Not all these questions need to be answered right now, but taking a few moments to think about a ship's concept makes the design process go much easier.

In addition to a concept, every good ship needs a name. Barsoomians might not be overly sentimental, but naming any ship larger than a small scout carries a useful purpose: it makes the craft easily identifiable in conversations, orders, and reports. It's much easier to discuss the losses and repairs of the Helium frigate *The Black Calot* or the loss of the Zodangan destroyer *The Child of Cluros* than saying "ship 2F24A" or "that third vessel in our fleet." This is especially useful for military or other ships that serve official functions.

Good names can come from anywhere. Some are named after famous heroes, battles, beasts, important historical events, or natural phenomena. Often the name invokes something about the ship, but at times it is selected simply because it sounds regal, intimidating, or interesting. Player heroes who find themselves in command of a vessel are encouraged to suggest names for it, and any heroes serving on a ship while they perform great acts of heroism and renown will find their ship and crew absorb some of that reputation as well. Truly great heroes may even find ships named for them or their heroics — a true testament to the profound impact their actions have on the world around them.

The following table can be used to help narrators and players name ships. They do not provide an exact name, but instead a style and focus for countless unique names that can be created using the guidance and examples provided.

Narrators planning on featuring airships and air conflict heavily in their campaigns may benefit from pregenerating a list of ship names to have on hand when the need arises. Generating a few captains and officers to attach to such ships may also be helpful. Full statistics aren't necessarily required; just a few notes and descriptions are enough to make encounters with various vessels seem interesting and distinctive.

D20	NAME FORMAT
01–03	The **(PERSON or BEAST)** of **(PLACE)**
04–06	The **(PERSON or BEAST)**'s **(PERSON or BEAST)**
07–09	The **(COLOR) (PERSON or BEAST)**
10–12	The **(PERSON or BEAST)**'s **(ITEM)**
13–15	The **(ITEM)** of **(PLACE)**
16–18	The **(COLOR) (ITEM)**
19–20	Roll twice and combine or invert results, such as **(The PLACE)** of **(PERSON or BEAST)**

D20	PERSON OR BEAST
01–07	**Dangerous Beast** (Calot, Banth, Malagor...)
08–09	**Other Animal** (Thoat, Sorak...)
10–13	**Dangerous Profession or Role** (Soldier, Assassin, Swordsman...)
14–18	**Title** (Jeddak, Jeddara, Princess...)
19–20	**Social Role or Family Position** (Friend, Child, Mother...)

D20	ITEM
01–07	**Weapon** (Sword, Dagger...)
08–10	**Clothing or Ornament** (Crown, Jewel, Cloak...)
11–13	**Body Part** (Eye, Claw, Hand...)
14–16	**Mundane Object or Tool** (Stone, Spade...)
17–20	**Object of Foreboding or Menace** (Grave, Skull...)

D20	PLACE
01–04	**City or Nation** (Helium, Kaol, Manator...)
05–08	**Land Formation** (Sea, Mountain, River...)
09–12	**Celestial Body** (Cluros, Thuria, Sun, Star...)
13–16	**Type of Building or Landmark** (Tower, Fortress, Spire...)
17–20	**Airborne Phenomenon** (Storm, Wind, Cloud...)

D20	COLOR
01–03	**Red** (Scarlet, Crimson, Ruby...)
04–07	**Black** (Ebon, Onyx, Jet...)
08–09	**Blue** (Sapphire, Cobalt, Azure, Indigo,...)
10–11	**Green** (Emerald, Verdant...)
12–14	**Metallic** (Gold, Silver, Bronze...)
15–16	**White** (Alabaster, Ivory, Pale...)
17	**Purple** (Violet, Amethyst....)
18	**Yellow/Orange** (Amber, Saffron, Titian...)
19	**Gray** (Ash, Slate, Smoke...)
20	**Brown** (Bay, Umber...)

STEP ONE:
ASSIGNING ATTRIBUTES

Ships have five attributes: Controls, Crew, Engines, Hull, and Systems. They also possess three special statistics which deal exclusively with taking and avoiding damage: Armor, stress, and breaches. When making a ship, ranks must be assigned to each attribute and then these additional statistics must be determined.

To assign attributes, begin at a base of 4. This will be modified by future steps in the ship creation process.

STEP TWO:
SELECT BASE FRAME

Ships are built around certain basic frames. These determine their size and base attributes. A frame is merely a starting point; attribute modifiers and other abilities will be added to develop the ship further. Each frame also has strong and weak attributes, which affect attribute maximums, reflecting the limitations of the ship's frame. Frames also determine a ship's size. The frames are:

PERSONAL

Small one- or two-person fliers made for speed and quick, short-ranged jaunts. Easily one of the most common fliers in all Barsoom. Even nations that lack any air presence to speak of sometimes have a few of these vehicles around in the hands of nobles and enthusiasts.

- **Attributes:** +1 Controls, +1 Engines, -1 Hull, -1 Systems
- **Strong Attributes:** Controls, Engines
- **Weak Attributes:** Hull, Systems
- **Graceful size**
- **Special:** Uses character's Passion in place of Crew. When Crew attributes would be reduced through damage, the character takes 2 🎲 Injury damage with the Fearsome quality instead.

SPORT FLIER

Whether a scout vessel or a pleasure yacht, this flier has a small crew of between one and three members and room for a few passengers or a small amount of cargo. They are generally more durable than personal fliers, but also nearly as fast and maneuverable.

- **Attributes:** Controls +1, Hull -1
- **Strong Attributes:** Controls
- **Weak Attributes:** Hull
- **Graceful size**
- **Special:** Uses character's Passion in place of Crew. When Crew attributes would be reduced through damage, the character takes 2 🎲 Injury damage with the Fearsome quality instead.

LIGHT TRANSPORT

Be it troops or goods, this ship allows for transporting passengers or supplies over moderate distances with relative speed and comfort. Not the fastest or the toughest of the fliers, they still perform well overall. Light Transports and similar civilian craft can often be customized to the owner's specifications more easily than some other airships, allowing them to become everything from pleasure yachts to smuggling vessels.

- **Attributes:** +1 to any one attribute, -1 to any one attribute.
- **Strong Attributes:** Whichever attribute gained +1 bonus at creation.
- **Weak Attributes:** Whichever attribute gained -1 penalty at creation.
- **Capable size**

LIGHT WARSHIP

The first of the true fighting ships, these ships are powerful and tough by civilian standards, but lack the range of some scouts and other vessels. These models tend to lack any noticeable strengths and weaknesses, instead performing as well-rounded and versatile military vessels.

- **Attributes:** None
- **Strong Attributes:** None
- **Weak Attributes:** None
- **Capable size**

HEAVY WARSHIP

Tough and dangerous, but still relatively maneuverable and fast. This vessel can go toe to toe with most combatants and at least acquit itself well, if not always come out victorious.

- **Attributes:** +1 Hull, -1 Engines
- **Strong Attributes:** Hull
- **Weak Attributes:** Engines
- **Capable size**
- **Special:** Gain Armor 1 for free.

HEAVY TRANSPORT

Big and slow but very tough, these are built for long hauls of goods and people. These can be luxurious barges or no-nonsense haulers, depending on the needs of the crew and the exact design.

- **Attributes:** +1 Hull, -1 Engines, -1 Controls
- **Strong Attributes:** Hull
- **Weak Attributes:** Engines, Controls
- **Lumbering size**
- **Special:** Gain Armor 1 for free.

BATTLEWAGON

The base design of the heavy military vessel. These range from moderately fast but still deadly cruisers to slow but utterly terrifying battleships that can level cities with bombs and sustained fire. Battlewagons are the flagships and line ships of Barsoom, with the most prominent navies only having a few.

- **Attributes:** +1 Crew, +1 Hull, -1 Engines, -1 Controls
- **Strong Attributes:** Crew, Hull
- **Weak Attributes:** Engines, Controls
- **Lumbering size**
- **Special:** Gain Armor 2 for free.

A Note of Balance

Frames are designed to accurately represent the strengths and weaknesses of specific types of airship; they are not intended to be balanced against each other purely on the basis of the mechanics presented. For example, a battlewagon is mechanically superior to a heavy transport in what each frame provides. This is because a large battleship is generally a superior ship to a transport craft in many ways, represented by ship attributes. Balance comes from limitations on larger, more complex, and more sophisticated craft. Thus a battlewagon has better attributes, but it requires a larger crew and more sophisticated maintenance and repairs. It also is more likely to put others on the defensive when encountered. These practical differences between types of airship don't have static mechanical effects, but they are important and narrators are encouraged to alter difficulties and present complications to reflect this.

STEP THREE:
SELECT PURPOSE

While a base frame shows what the ship was originally designed for, a ship's purpose defines what it is doing now. There are three purposes: Cargo, Civilian, and Military.

In many cases frame and purpose line up as expected, with warships being used for military purposes and other fliers employed for cargo or civilian purposes. However, this is not required or universal. An old battlewagon might be refitted to become a cargo vessel, while a civilian racing yacht might be transformed into a military scouting vessel. Pirates and raiders are especially known for taking ships built for one purpose and using them for another.

Each purpose adds 1 to a particular attribute as follows:

- **Cargo:** +1 to Crew
- **Civilian:** +1 to Systems
- **Military:** +1 to Hull

Narrators can create additional purposes if they desire — perhaps there is a culture on Barsoom that develops specialized racing or stealth airships. However, these differences between ships of the three basic purposes may also be created using the design variants for airships presented later in this chapter (see *Design Variants*).

Optional Step:
Original Purpose

Narrators wishing to retain purpose as presented in Chapter 5 of the core rulebook may do so. Applied consistently and fairly, the additional Momentum provided when purpose is used won't disrupt play and will speed conflicts between certain types of ships. However, it's one more thing to remember and track in an already-expanded rules system, hence not being included by default.

Optional Step:
Design Variants

If a narrator uses the design variant rules for airships later in the chapter, they should select and apply these to ships before other attributes are assigned. For example, a flier frame built in Helium would begin with +1 Engines and Controls over its default (see *Kingdom and Culture Variants*). Design variants cost nothing to add, but only one variant for kingdom or culture, and one for operations, may be added to a ship.

STEP FOUR:
SPEND DESIGN POINTS

In addition to the base frame, ships have design points they spend to increase attributes and capabilities beyond the basics for their chosen frame. Raising attributes, adding weapons and armor, giving ship-specific talents, and other special abilities all use design points. The number of points can vary wildly, with average unremarkable craft only having a few, while terrifying battleships possess thirty or more design points. Generally, most ships fall into the 3 to 8 design point range, with heavily armed and armored ships costing much more.

Narrators and players using these rules to design a ship for use as a regular vessel for the player heroes should generally start with 12 design points; 18 if the ship is intended to be an active combat vessel; 6 if you're designing a basic personal or civilian flier with only a few minor modifications. This allows a very capable but not overwhelming vessel. Exceptional vessels or those purchased with experience (see *Fliers as Core Equipment*) may have additional design points at the narrator's discretion.

INCREASE ATTRIBUTES

Attributes may be increased by 1 for 1 design point, repeatable up to the ship's maximum. A ship's maximum attributes are determined by its frame as shown on the following table.

SHIP ATTRIBUTE IS…	MAIMUM ATTRIBUTE
Weak	6
Normal	9
Strong	12

INCREASING SHIP ATTRIBUTES ABOVE THE MAXIMUM

Attributes can theoretically be pushed above normal attribute maximums, but this is costly. The first advance over the maximum costs 2 attribute points, the second 3 attribute points, and the third 4 attribute points. No attribute may be raised more than 3 above its normal maximum.

ADDING ARMS AND ARMOR

Ship guns, bombs, and armor can be added with design points as well. A ship may have main and secondary guns, each costing 1 design point per 1 🎲 damage. These guns possess the Armor Piercing quality. Main guns must always be at least 2 🎲 higher in damage than the ship's secondary guns.

Bombs may also be added for 1 design point per 🎲 — their limitations on usage and targeting make them less expensive.

Armor costs 2 design points per rank. Some frames come with one or more ranks of free Armor, though additional Armor can be purchased up to the normal maximum with design points.

A ship's size limits potential arms and Armor. A Graceful-size ship can only mount 4 🎲 of weapons and possess 1 Armor. Capable-size ships can mount up to 10 🎲 of weapons and have 3 Armor. Lumbering size ships can mount up to 15 🎲 of weapons and have 5 Armor total. These extreme limits are rarely met as they tend to be costly and result in design flaws in other areas.

SHIP TALENTS

Special airships may have their own talents, functioning the same as character talents except for being limited to ship actions and attributes. Narrators can assign talents to ships as needed, while players can develop them by spending experience or while creating a ship using the design rules. Players and narrators can create their own talents for ships using the same guidelines presented in *Chapter 3: Talents* in the ***John Carter of Mars*** core rulebook.

Talents cost 3 design points per grade of talent. Here are some sample ship talents.

ANGLED ARMOR (GRADE 1)

The ship's armor is more effective at deflecting glancing blows and minor hits than other similarly protected vessels. Gain 1 additional Armor against any attack that succeeds but fails to generate additional Momentum.

DEADLY GUNS (GRADE 1)

The ship's guns are exceptionally effective, especially when a direct hit is scored. The first Momentum spent on extra damage for a successful weapon attack deals an additional 2 🎲 instead of the normal 1 🎲.

SUPERIOR CONTROLS (GRADE 1

The design of the ship's steering mechanism and other controls allows for superior response and performance. Gain d20 to all Controls tests to steer or maneuver the ship.

DAMAGE CONTROL (GRADE 2)

The ship's engineers are skilled at fixing damaged systems with quick-patches and jury-rigging to keep the ship operating at peak efficiency even when damaged. The effects of the first breach suffered by a ship are ignored. The breach still happens, but no roll for its effects is made.

These example talents and others designed by players and narrators can be increased in grade as well as function. For example, a Superior Controls (Grade 2) talent could add 2d20 instead of 1d20.

BUYING SHIP TALENTS WITH EXPERIENCE

Ship talents cost the same XP as character talents, though players can pool their experience for ships they share ownership of. Experience spent to upgrade a ship is usually not refunded if a ship is lost or destroyed, though narrators are free to do so or allow characters to acquire similar talents for any new ship they acquire.

STEP FIVE:
SHIP FLAWS

Ships, especially those with experimental or high-performance designs, tend to have weaknesses as well as strengths. To reflect this a ship may have one or more flaws. Flaws grant, instead of cost, design points, but they create conditions where the narrator may trigger the flaw and the ship must either suffer the effects or the ship's crew must pay Momentum to avoid it.

Each flaw grants 2 bonus design points. A ship may not have more than two flaws. Here are some sample flaws.

DREAD PIRATE VESSEL

The ship is recognized as a terrifying raider and pirate ship. While this might sometimes be useful, it usually results in difficulties finding ports and attracts the attention of the local navies and pirate hunters. When trying to avoid notice by curious authorities or to lay low, lose 2 Momentum.

TEMPERAMENTAL

One of the ship's systems just sometimes randomly malfunctions, usually at the worst time. The narrator can assign a minor malfunction to the ship once per game session. To avoid this, lose 2 Momentum.

MOTLEY CREW

Either due to gaps in their training or discipline, sometimes the ship's crew isn't up to normal efficiency. The narrator can reduce the ship's Crew attribute for a scene. To avoid this, lose 2 Momentum.

OUTDATED WEAPONRY

The guns on the ship are out of date and hard to maintain. Once per game session, the narrator can rule that a weapon jams or otherwise misfires, requiring a crew member to make a Reason + Might (D2) test to manually clear or realign the weapon. The weapon cannot be used until this test succeeds. To automatically clear the jam, pay 4 Momentum. If the ship has multiple weapons, this only affects one of them.

EXPERIMENTAL

Something about the ship is new and untested. Pick an attribute other than Crew. When a complication is rolled with tests using this attribute the complication is significantly greater than normal, causing additional problems. To avoid this, lose 2 Momentum. Spending Momentum does not eliminate the complication, but it reduces it to a less dramatic and more manageable level.

Step Six:
Final Touches

All ships have a single stress track and their size determines their maximum stress and the number of breaches a ship can suffer.

- A Lumbering ship has maximum stress equal to the sum of its Hull and Systems plus 3. It can suffer a number of breaches equal to half its highest attribute, rounded up.
- A Capable ship has a maximum stress equal to the sum of its Hull and Systems. It can suffer a number of Breaches equal to half its lowest attribute, rounded up.
- Graceful ships have a maximum stress equal to the higher of their Hull or Systems attribute. They can only suffer a single breach.

Ships with Renown and Reputation

Ships do not gain renown, but they often absorb some of the fame of their crew. A ship with a famous commander or crew member would become well known and part of the character's overall legend. This is especially true of characters whose archetypes and adventures are closely tied to ships and airship action, but it is somewhat true of any famous hero or villain.

In some cases, using the ship of a famous pirate, raider, commander, or ruler may allow another character to borrow a bit of the reputation of the ship's owner, but only as long as people don't know it's not the vessel's famed commander at the helm.

Example: *Xaidor Malas, a feared First Born pirate, is captured and imprisoned by some raiders while traveling in disguise. Her ally, Maria Henderson, seeks to take Xaidor's crew and ship, the* Banth's Eye, *to rescue her. Arriving where her friend is being held, Maria shouts that "the great pirate queen Xaidor" has come to free her "consort" which the raiders were foolish enough to capture. As none of the raiders (obviously) know exactly what Xaidor looks like and Maria is taking care to stay at a distance and mask her Earthborn appearance, the narrator lowers the difficulty to fool and intimidate the raiders, a benefit of the* Banth's Eye *and Xaidor's reputation as a fearsome pirate!*

Of course, stealing or otherwise acquiring the ship of a famous or feared individual is itself an act worthy of renown. If a character accomplishes such a feat they may find themselves recognized as the new captain or owner of their new vessel.

Example of Ship Design

The following example brings all the elements of this section together to design a new airship, the *Sword of the Sun*, for an upcoming adventure.

Example: *The players in Jason's upcoming campaign will be given access to their own ship, and he decides to use the ship design rules to create it. He envisions a modest-sized but fast craft, maybe with a few surprises for the heroes to enjoy. Using the random tables for inspiration he comes up with the name* Sword of the Sun, *which seems auspicious and dramatic enough for an adventuring vessel.*

Jason intends for the ship to be a combat-ready flier. However, he's not seeing it as a warship as such, but a converted civilian vessel. Thus he assigns it the Light Transport frame, which allows him to pick one strong and one weak attribute. He wants the Sword of the Sun *to be fast, but he doesn't see it having a lot of crew, instead having to rely on the player heroes and a handful of assistants to operate. Thus he sets Engines as strong and Crew as weak. These attributes gain a +1 and -1 respectively, beginning at 5 and 3, everything else begins at 4 before design points are spent.*

When coming up with the concept for the Sword of the Sun, *Jason homes in on its purpose: it's a military vessel despite its civilian origins. This gives it a +1 Hull to reflect its sturdy construction and how the basic frame has been reinforced for combat. This raises the ship's Hull attribute to 5. As Jason is also using Operations and Kingdom or Culture variants, he applies these now as well. Consulting the variants section, he decides the ship was constructed by the Okar. This gives the ship another +1 to Hull and +1 to Systems. The ship now has Controls 4, Crew 3, Engines 5, Hull 6 and Systems 5. He also thinks the ship operates mostly as a privateer, gaining +1 to two different attributes but -1 to another. He drops the Hull to 5 and increases Controls and Engines both by 1, making them 5 and 6.*

It now time for Jason to spend his design points. He decides to give the ship 12 to start, enough for a solid ship with some noteworthy abilities. Jason wants the ship to be fast and maneuverable. He spends 3 design points on Engines, 2 on Controls, raising them to Engines 9 and Controls 7, leaving him with 7 more design points to spend.

Jason figures the ship has limited armor and decent guns — it's a converted civilian ship made for speed, after all. He spends 2 design points on Armor 1 and 4 more for two 2 🎲 *guns. This leaves him with 1 more point for the* Sword of the Sun.

Jason realizes the Sword of the Sun *is special enough to warrant a talent. He creates a Grade 1 talent for the ship: Modified Engine. This grants an additional Momentum whenever the ship uses Momentum in a test involving the Engines attribute. This represents the* Sword of the Sun's *experimental design that allows it to get extra speed and lift, which a skilled pilot can use to their advantage. This talent costs 3 design points, bringing the total to 14 design points, two over the allotted 12.*

Instead of reducing anything, Jason decides a ship with an Experimental Engine and so many modifications deserves an interesting Flaw. He makes the ship Temperamental, meaning he can occasionally assign malfunctions for the crew to deal with. This gives him 2 more design points, leaving him with a balance of 0.

With that done, the Sword of the Sun *is complete. A very fast and maneuverable flier, it is capable of taking a reasonable amount of punishment, though its low Crew leaves it somewhat vulnerable to severe damage by limiting it to 2 Breaches. The final ship looks like this.*

SWORD OF THE SUN

CAPABLE MILITARY LIGHT TRANSPORT

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
3	9	7
SYSTEMS	**HULL**	**ARMOR**
5	5	1

WEAPONS

Main guns dealing 2 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality.

- **Stress:** 10
- **Breaches:** 2

TALENTS

MODIFIED ENGINE (GRADE 1)

Gain an additional Momentum on any roll using Engines that already generates Momentum.

DESIGN VARIANTS

While airships are largely the same across Barsoom in function and design, certain cultures and kingdoms build and maintain their vehicles to favor certain roles and functions. In addition, some national navies outfit ships for particular missions or combat functions.

These design variants are both optional and largely speculative. Narrators strictly adhering in their games to "JWBD" airships (Just What Burroughs Did) will not wish to use them. However, it makes sense that peoples as motivated and adaptable as Barsoomians would customize their ships when necessary and possible, and we know from the novels that Carthoris in particular was fond of making improvements to his craft.

KINGDOM AND CULTURE VARIANTS

The following variants are applied to the ships of various kingdoms and cultures, reflecting their difference in focus and design. These may be used by narrators as inspiration for other variations by kingdoms, groups, and cultures.

HELIUM

Helium ships are among the fastest and most maneuverable of all airships on Barsoom. They are the envy of most other red kingdoms, and many efforts have been made to copy or steal their designs.

- **Effect:** +1 Controls, +1 Engine.

ZODANGA

Zodangan airships lack Helium's speed and grace, but they are aggressive craft designed for conflict. They often sport additional troops and weaponry, giving them a key advantage in close assaults.

- **Effect:** +1 Crew, weapons deal +1 🎲 of damage.

KAOL

Lacking its own navy for years, Kaolian airship design is decidedly behind the times. Even in later eras where the nation attempts to rectify their lack of airpower, they have far to go in design and function before they can equal other similar nations — though they are regularly experimenting with new techniques and models to give them some advantage, usually with mixed results.

- **Effect:** -1 to any two attributes, +2 to any other attribute.

OTHER RED KINGDOMS

While generally falling behind Helium in design, many red Martian kingdoms have respectable navies with their own advantages.

- **Effect:** +1 to one attribute of choice; this effect is applied to all ships from that kingdom.

OKAR

Safe inside their cities and protected by the dreaded Guardian, the ships of the Okar are designed for short-range operations in the harsh arctic environs of their northern home. They are generally less concerned with speed and direct combat ability over durability and stability, allowing them to better weather not only the arctic climate but also the Guardian, should they accidentally find themselves trapped within its effects.

- **Effect:** +1 Hull, +1 Systems.

FIRST BORN

First Born ships are primarily aimed at raiding and fast strike capabilities. First Born navies operate as pirates more than the structured and sophisticated navies of many other nations. This means they must be more independent and capable of solo or small-scale operations than ships part of a larger, more organized fleet.

- **Effect:** Crew +1, Engines +1.

RAIDER

Raider vessels are often aggressive craft maintained with plundered and salvaged technology. This makes them erratic in design and unpredictable in capabilities.

- **Effect:** +1 to any three attributes, -1 to any one attribute. May trade a +1 attribute for +1 Armor or +1 🎲 to a type of weapon.

JAHARAN

The airships of Jahar were unique in using both a short-ranged disintegrator and being painted with a special blue paint that was the only known defense against those weapons.

- **Effect:** Replace the normal weaponry of a ship with disintegrators. These cannot fire past Away range and suffer a +1 difficulty at that range. However, they double the normal combat dice 🎲 of the ship's weaponry. These ships are also painted with a blue paint that completely negates all damage from disintegrator weapons.

OPERATION VARIANTS

ASSAULT

Assault ships are designed for close attack, boarding, and hit and run engagements. They are well armored and armed.

- **Effects:** -1 Systems, +1 Armor, add a battery of boarding cannons that deal 2 🎲 of damage and can be used at Reach range.

BOMBERS

Not common in many navies, some conquerors or tyrannical jeddaks may outfit their bomb-carrying warships with additional ordnance so as to more effectively blast their foes into submission. Bombers are generally slower and less capable in air battles, often requiring escorts to protect them.

- **Effect:** -1 Engines, -1 Controls, add +2 🎲 to all bomb-type weapons. At the narrator's discretion this variant may be used to give Bombs dealing 2 🎲 damage with the Explosive quality to a ship that lacks them.

CARRIER

Intended to carry goods and passengers over long distances, larger carriers might even have some small-scale fliers on board for characters to pilot. Carriers tend to be of great economic or strategic value, but they sacrifice offensive power and speed for the ability to haul around troops and supplies.

- **Effect:** - 1 Controls, -1 Engines, +1 Hull, +1 Crew, increase Armor by 1 but remove 2 🎲 worth of weapons. If no weapons are present, reduce another attribute by 1.

DIPLOMATIC

Designed for aesthetic appeal and fast travel, diplomatic vessels are targets for raiders and pirates. Unarmed or lightly armed, they often sport armor to let them take a few hits as they attempt to flee.

- **Effects:** -1 Hull, +1 Engine, +1 Controls, reduce number of weapons by 1 or reduce all weapons damage by 1 🎲. Increase Armor by 1.

PRIVATEER

Privateer vessels are designed to be flexible "jack of all trade" craft that can handle chases, battle, transport, and various other tasks. They are rarely the best ship for a particular task, but they are frequently superior at performing many different roles. Privateers, despite their name, aren't always privately-owned warships and adventuring craft — some all-purpose warships designed for lengthy patrols and multiple roles are found in the navies of various nations on Barsoom.

- **Effects:** +1 to any two Attributes, -1 to any one Attribute.

RESEARCH

Designed for exploration and scientific research, these ships are lightly armed but have an abundance of scientific equipment and extra technically-adept crew. Many kingdoms and groups have no research vessels, though Helium is famous for them.

- **Effects:** +1 Systems, +1 Crew, reduce weapons damage by 1 🎲 — this may remove weapons if they only inflict 1 🎲 of damage.

SHIP OF THE LINE

Borrowing a Jasoomian naval term, these airships are designed to be frontline fighters suitable for large-scale battles and blockades. Powerhouses, they often sport extra firepower and are not used in long-distance operations.

- **Effects:** +1 Armor, -1 Engines, +1 🎲 to main weapon (not bombs or support batteries).

RECONNAISSANCE

Airships fitted for reconnaissance focus on speed and support systems; they are generally trying to avoid conflict in favor of intelligence gathering.

- **Effects:** +1 Systems, +1 Engines, reduce Armor by 1 (or Hull if the ship has no Armor).

COMBINING VARIANTS

Kingdom or culture variants and operational variants can be combined to create varied and interesting vessels. This does alter the attributes and capabilities of ships more than their default versions, but once applied the variants require no additional mechanics or rules to use.

Example: *Sam is designing an important warship for an upcoming adventure. Instead of designing the ship from scratch, he is going to modify an existing ship using the variant rules. The ship, Calot's Claw, is a Heliumite frigate designed to carry a force of troops led by the player heroes. Sam takes the basic frigate and applies both the Helium and carrier variants. Helium's superior designs give the ship a +1 to Controls and Engine, while being a carrier gives them -1 to the same attributes but +1 to Hull and Crew. In addition, the carrier gains an additional point of Armor but loses 2 🎲 worth of weapons. Looking at the frigate, Sam decides the troops' quarters were added to the ship in place of bomb compartments, leaving it with only its basic guns as armament. Thus the Calot's Claw has the same Controls and Engine as a default frigate and loses its bombs, but gains additional Armor, more Crew, a better Hull, and the ability to transport large numbers of troops — an ability with no direct mechanical use in ship actions and conflict but many possible applications in an adventure.*

In adventures or campaigns focused on fliers or naval actions, this variety is not only interesting, but it leads to potential adventures. What if the heroes can steal the designs for an enemy airship or develop new ways to improve their fliers? Perhaps an enemy could acquire their own nation's designs, building a force to threaten the heroes and their allies.

Airships

This section provides numerous types of ready-to-use airships for narrators and player heroes in John Carter. Most of the airships here are taken from the Barsoom novels, though a few are speculative creations that are not known to exist, but may one day fly the skies of Barsoom — these literal flights of fancy are marked with (*) for ease of identification.

The airships in this section are intended to be standard versions of their type. There are certainly variations of these vessels which are faster, tougher, slower, harder to control, etc., throughout Barsoom. Narrators should feel free to alter the attributes and other statistics of these fliers to suit their needs..

Optional rule:

Adding Design Points to Existing Ships

Narrators wishing to quickly customize or modify a ship don't need to use the full ship design rules presented earlier. Instead they may give an existing type of ship a few design points to spend on increasing attributes, adding weapons, or buying talents.

Example: *Sam also gives the Calot's Claw 3 design points to further customize it. He adds a Troop Support (Grade 1) Talent, giving a bonus d20 on all boarding actions to represent the extra soldiers the Calot's Claw carries who can assist in boarding ships or repelling boarders.*

Flaws may also be added to a ship to generate design points and make them distinctive. Flaws may also be added without additional design points if desired.

Generally, adding 2 to 5 design points plus a flaw is enough to make a particular ship distinct but not overpowered. Adding 6 to 10 design points creates a "best in class" ship with weapons, armor, and noticeably higher attributes. Adding 11 or more design points provides enough resources to push a ship beyond its normal role and limitations, especially when spent to increase attributes above their normal maximums. For example, for 11 design points a lumbering dreadnaught could have its Engines upgraded to 9 without sacrificing any arms or Armor, making it a city-sized warship that can outrace many fast fliers. Throwing in a flaw would allow this same ship to gain Controls 6, making it more maneuverable than a basic frigate.

Such "super-ships" are tempting to create and make for great occasional wonders and super-weapons, but throwing too many design points and actively trying to break the ship system will eventually make airship travel and encounters feel very different from the *John Carter* novels.

Airships as Core Equipment

As noted in the core book, having any flier as a piece of core equipment is a serious advantage, one with a recommended cost of 50xp or more. This might seem excessive, but remember this allows a character to own a vehicle they can always have at hand, which cannot be destroyed or taken away for more than a short period. That is a hefty advantage in many scenarios, one worthy of the high cost.

In addition, it is very difficult to use the core equipment rules as written for anything larger than a personal flier. Airships, due to their size and nature, cannot be "always on hand." Often the best a player hero can hope for is their ship is "docked reasonably close" or "moored nearby." This isn't quite the same as a trusty sword or other piece of always-at-the-ready weapon or gear. Setting aside the core equipment rules, narrators wishing to allow player heroes to have a special airship they use often at hand have two options.

First, they can let one or more characters possess their own airship with the understanding it will not be destroyed or taken away except in dramatically appropriate and sensible situations. It's not exactly core equipment, nor is it indestructible or unlosable, but it is still important. There is no direct cost or mechanical effect for this option: it is simply an agreement between the narrator and players.

Alternatively, narrators can charge players for fliers as specialized form of core equipment but at a reduced cost and shared among them, to reflect that it is a durable and readily accessible vehicle, but may not always be as easy to replace or acquire as normal core equipment is. This option should cost at least 25xp shared among the players, with larger and more effective ships costing more.

Either option is acceptable, though note that charging characters experience for their ships makes it even more important that narrators take care to not destroy or diminish the ship and its usefulness throughout the campaign.

BATTLESHIP

Among the largest and most dangerous of the military airships on Barsoom, featuring multiple batteries of weapons and hundreds of armed warriors and crew.

LUMBERING HEAVY WARSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
9	5	4

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
6	10	3

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 4 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality. Secondary guns inflicting 2 🎲 of damage with the Armor Piercing quality. Bombs capable of dealing 4 🎲 damage with the Explosive quality.

- **Stress:** 21
- **Breaches:** 5

Among the most fearsome airships to grace the skies, the battleships of the great navies of Barsoom are massive warships capable of large-scale warfare and transporting great numbers of warriors safely and efficiently. Expensive to build and maintain, they are among the rarest craft in service, and are rarely fielded without at least a few cruisers, scouts, or frigates to protect them from surgical strikes from smaller, more maneuverable craft.

Many nations only possess one or two battleships in their navies. Several nations, such as Kaol, have no such ships available to them. This makes a battleship a sought-after prize for raiders and pirates, and any downed battleship would still be of strategic interest if it could be repaired or its components salvaged for later use.

CIVILIAN FLIER

A common sight in and around most cities on Barsoom. Fast and reliable, but fragile, the civilian fliers are used by nobles and other prominent civilians for personal travel.

CAPABLE OR GRACEFUL CIVILIAN VESSEL

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
5	4	4

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
5	5	0

WEAPONS

None

- **Stress:** 10 (Capable), 5 (Graceful)
- **Breaches:** 2 (Capable), 1 (Graceful)

This is a catch-all category for moderate-sized fliers used as pleasure craft, personal vehicles, and other civilian functions. Most are operated by the nobility and other prominent citizens, though sometimes another character manages to acquire and operate such a vehicle for pleasure and profit.

Civilian fliers can be quite luxurious, but they are also unarmed and unarmored. They are easily brought down in a fight, and smart captains and pilots do whatever they can to avoid bringing such ships into battle.

CRUISER

A military flier suitable for long-range missions and defensive patrol duty, it is the prime weapon of many of Barsoom's navies.

CAPABLE HEAVY WARSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
8	5	5

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
6	8	2

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 3 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality. Secondary guns inflicting 2 🎲 Armor Piercing damage. Bombs dealing 3 🎲 of damage with the Explosive quality.

- **Stress:** 14
- **Breaches:** 3

The largest and toughest of the non-battleship-style military airships, cruisers are designed to mix armament and speed in a deadly combination. Capable of long patrols and raiding as well as participating in larger-scale engagements, cruisers form the backbone of most airship navies alongside their smaller cousins, the frigate and destroyer.

For the smallest navies and a few successful pirates and raiders, the cruiser is their largest combat vessel. In such cases, it might be customized with additional weapons and armor to make it almost akin to a "light" battleship. These craft would likely be somewhat slower or less maneuverable (-1 to Engines and/or Controls).

DESTROYER

The largest and most dangerous of the medium-sized military fliers, destroyers often patrol close to home, only venturing out as part of attack fleets or to support larger ships on various missions.

CAPABLE HEAVY WARSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
6	5	5
SYSTEMS	**HULL**	**ARMOR**
6	6	2

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 3 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality and bombs inflicting 2 🎲 of damage with the Explosive quality.

- **Stress:** 12
- **Breaches:** 3

Midway between a cruiser and a frigate, some navies field this flier to fulfil roles requiring both firepower and speed. Aimed largely at assault and combat, the average destroyer is less suited to fast response and long-range patrols, instead serving as the heaviest hitter among medium-sized warships.

Destroyer captains are almost always teedwars or very experienced and respected dwars, though in many nations influential nobles may be given these ranks and command as a privilege of their status. Destroyers are among the heaviest ships one can typically expect see among raiders and similar groups of outlaws. Anything larger is too much of a threat for the nations of Barsoom to leave in the hands of privateers and pirates.

FIGHTER*

A look at how one day Earth air tactics may influence Barsoomian design, this small and deadly craft makes up in agility and first strike potential what it lacks in range and durability.

GRACEFUL FIGHTER

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
*	6	7
SYSTEMS	**HULL**	**ARMOR**
4	4	0

*None, uses a character's Passion in place of Crew. When Crew attributes would be reduced through damage, the character takes 2 🎲 Injury damage with the Fearsome quality instead.

WEAPONS

Guns inflicting 2 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality. Bombs (see text).

- **Stress:** 4 (Graceful)
- **Breaches:** 1 (Graceful)

Red Martians do not yet use small-scale airships for the sort of fast-paced dogfighting common in Earth aerial combat. However, should Carthoris and other innovators in airship design continue to tweak, adjust, and update flier design, Helium or some similar nation may develop a fast-moving armed fighter. Such vehicles would likely lack the range and stability of most airships, but they would be fast and deadly. The ship presented here is an example of such a possible flier.

FIGHTER THRUSTERS

Fighters are small and almost wasp-like, with four stabilizer wings that help with maneuvering during combat. Special thrusters allow for tight turns and powerful but short bursts of speed. The fighter is short-ranged, needing maintenance and fuel at a base or on an airship large enough to serve as a carrier. These fighters come equipped with lightweight but powerful guns and can carry a few small bombs at the cost of range and maneuverability (+1 difficulty to Pilot and Engine tests until the bombs are dropped). These bombs inflict 2 🎲 of damage with the Explosive quality and can only be used once before the supply is exhausted.

DREADNOUGHT

The greatest of the warships, capable of devastating whole settlements and laying waste to whole fleets. Often found leading great navies, making them even more dangerous to encounter.

LUMBERING HEAVY WARSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
10	4	4

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
7	11	4

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 5 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality. Secondary guns inflicting 3 🎲 Armor Piercing damage. Bombs capable of dealing 4 🎲 damage with the Explosive quality.

- **Stress:** 23
- **Breaches:** 6

The large cousin of the battleship, dreadnoughts are rare. Many airship navies have none and even the great navy of Helium can produce, crew, and maintain only a handful. Compared to most other craft, the dreadnaught is slow and less maneuverable, but it makes up for this lack of mobility with thick armor and powerful armaments.

Most dreadnoughts are deployed with smaller craft as an escort whose main function is to keep the flying behemoth from being outflanked and outmaneuvered. This strategy usually works well, with frigates, cruisers, and even scouts fending off surgical assaults and hit-and-run raids on the dreadnought, which then blasts the enemy apart with its superior firepower. Commanders of dreadnoughts are often odwars in their navies, though experienced or well-regarded teedwars are also sometimes given command of a dreadnought and its escort force. Dreadnought crews are as impressive as their armaments in size, with the largest supporting crews numbering ten thousand or more.

FLYING FORTRESS*

The clear product of a deranged power-mad mind, this floating citadel can destroy whole cities and fleets with its impressive array of weaponry. Large enough to quarter and supply its own armies and fleets, it is a mobile national power in and of itself.

GIGANTIC TECHNOLOGICAL TERROR

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
10	5	5

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
7	12	4

WEAPONS

One superweapon inflicting 7 🎲 of damage—it has the Explosive quality against characters and structures, and the Armor Piercing quality against ships (can only be fired every third turn). Main guns dealing 5 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality, secondary guns dealing 2 🎲 damage with the Armor Piercing quality, and bombs dealing 5 🎲 of damage with the Explosive quality.

Special: The flying fortress' main and secondary guns can both be fired twice per turn.

- **Stress:** 29
- **Breaches:** 9

Barsoomian tyrants and mad scientists love flashy and horrifying displays of technological prowess, and the mobile fortress is a staple of many science-fiction and space fantasy stories. It is entirely possible that some twisted genius or megalomaniacal jeddak could use ancient technology or some new discovery to create a giant floating castle or fortress from which they can menace all of Barsoom. This vessel is an example of one such possible creation.

The flying fortress is a formidable creation on its own, but it is also large enough to serve as a mobile airbase for a whole fleet. This means that those facing such a threat would likely find themselves also fighting numerous smaller ships. The flying fortress invariably comes with some sort of mega-cannon, super-radium gun, lightning projector, or similar strange and terrible weapon that can be used to destroy ships and raze settlements, but which must be reloaded or recharged before each firing.

Threats such as the flying fortress are usually best destroyed from within by an elite team of brave heroes infiltrating and disabling this technological horror from the inside. However, the statistics for it are still provided should narrators wish to run ship conflicts featuring such a dread creation.

GIGANTIC SIZE SHIPS

Unique superweapons such as the flying fortress are so large and dangerous they have their own size: Gigantic. These are not included in the usual ship rules as the existence of such vessels is largely speculative and any in existence are rare enough to deserve special mention.

Gigantic size exists above Lumbering size. It has all the benefits and drawbacks of being a larger size ship; it simply exists a step beyond the normal range of ship sizes.

A Gigantic ship has a stress track equal to the sum of its Hull and Systems plus 10. They possess Breaches equal to half their highest attribute (round up) plus 3.

Ship conflicts against this size of ship are long, drawn-out affairs where opponents have little chance of victory unless they are exceptionally lucky or well prepared. Narrators may wish to avoid engaging in ship conflicts of this sort except at the climax of a campaign or similar dramatic moment.

FRIGATE

The smallest and most versatile of the front-line military fliers, frigates see regular use by pirates, raiders, navies, and adventurers.

CAPABLE WARSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
4	6	5

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
5	6	1

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 2 ⬢ damage with the Armor Piercing quality, and bombs inflicting 2 ⬢ damage with the Explosive quality.

- **Stress:** 11
- **Breaches:** 2

The lightest of the main warships, frigates are a favorite of raiders, pirates, and pirate hunters alike. Relatively tough and packing decent armaments, they are also faster and more maneuverable than their larger cousins. In smaller navies and among raiders and pirates, they are often the bulk of a fleet's heavy attack force.

Frigates are usually captained by a dwar or higher-ranked officer, and in some nations heroic nobles or famed officers are given or assigned a frigate to serve as a mobile base of operations for their adventures and missions.

PERSONAL FLIER

Easily the most affordable and common flier in existence, this one-person craft can carry a pilot and the occasional passenger quickly across the red planet, though its small and fragile form makes it vulnerable to attack.

GRACEFUL PERSONAL AIRSHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
*	7	7

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
3	3	0

*None, uses a character's Passion in place of Crew. When Crew attributes would be reduced through damage, the character takes 2 ⬢ Injury damage with the Fearsome quality instead.

- **Stress:** 3
- **Breaches:** 1

Personal fliers are a common sight near cities such as Helium and Zodanga. Nobles and prominent citizens own and operate their own fliers, but there are places in the cities and larger settlements where someone can rent a single- or two-seat flier for short periods. The default design for a personal flier is flat and low, with the pilot strapped in and essentially horizontal and covered by a small windscreen. This gives the flier superior aerodynamics, further enhancing its speed and maneuverability compared to larger vehicles.

What personal fliers lack in coverage and crew, they make up for in maneuverability and adaptability. A skilled pilot can take one through areas a larger ship could never go. Personal fliers are unarmed, though the military will sometimes use them for scouts and spies, especially in areas where these fliers are a common sight.

PIRATE RAIDER

Somewhere between an armed transport and a warship, this vessel is popular with raiders and pirates seeking to attack vulnerable targets, taking captives and plunder.

CAPABLE RAIDER

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
6	6	5

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
4	6	1

WEAPONS

Main guns inflicting 3 ⬢ of damage with the Armor Piercing quality.

- **Stress:** 10
- **Breaches:** 2

Stripped of luxuries and designed for quick powerful strikes and a fast retreat, the pirate raider is the scourge of transports and civilian fliers across Barsoom. A favorite of First Born raiders and other groups, this ship is not so much its own type of vessel as it is an example of how other ships are captured and modified. A pirate raider may be a stripped-down warship or a civilian flier with guns and armor added. Either way, it's a dangerous and unpredictable opponent.

Scout Flier

Designed for exploration and reconnaissance, the scout flier carries a small crew and handful of passengers to the farthest reaches of Barsoom. Though not considered combat vessels, most can nevertheless defend themselves if pressed.

GRACEFUL OR CAPABLE SCOUT SHIP

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
*	7	6
SYSTEMS	**HULL**	**ARMOR**
6	4	1

*None, uses a character's Passion in place of Crew. When Crew attributes would be reduced through damage, the character takes 2 🎲 Injury damage with the Fearsome quality instead.

WEAPONS

May mount one 2 🎲 gun. If so, reduce Controls by 1.

- **Stress:** 10 (Capable), 6 (Graceful)
- **Breaches:** 2 (Capable), 1 (Graceful)

Scout fliers are small craft designed for speed and reconnaissance. They usually have a one- or two-person crew, though some can carry a handful of extra passengers and are thus Capable in size. Scout fliers often travel long distances to remote or hostile areas and so have extra supplies and survival gear stored onboard. Scout craft may be armed, but these armaments are usually light so as to not weigh down and slow the craft unnecessarily.

Thark Airship*

Another look at a possible future, this flier imagines that one day the green Martians overcome their long-lasting aversion to flight and attempt to take to the skies in vessels of their own design.

CAPABLE GREEN MARTIAN WAR TRANSPORT

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
6	4	3
SYSTEMS	**HULL**	**ARMOR**
4	6	1

WEAPONS

None, relies on skilled Thark riflemen firing from the deck and from firing stations around the ship.

- **Stress:** 10
- **Breaches:** 2

Traditionally the green Martians do not fly. They don't like to fly, generally don't fly on ships made by others, and certainly don't build airships of their own. Your average green Martian only interacts with an airship when they are shooting at it from the safety of the ground with their rifles.

However, times can change. The Tharks, in particular, are allied with numerous airship-using cities and nations. It is possible that over time, at least some of the younger, more ambitious Tharks may decide to craft their own airships with the help of these allies. The airship detailed here speculates on what such a craft might be like.

Thark airships are larger and taller than other airships of similar design, so as to accommodate crew and passengers who tower over the other peoples of Barsoom. These ships are also built mostly for raiding and transporting warriors to attack others, specifically other green Martian hordes. To help deflect enemy rifle fire, the hull is rounded and polished to allow a glancing shot to deflect off the hull without doing damage. This design gives the Thark ship a fatter, more rounded appearance when compared to the sleek long lines of most other airships. This makes the craft harder to control at high speed or in bad weather, meaning the Tharks only use them when conditions are optimal.

While this speculative craft is called a Thark airship because that is the most likely green Martian nation to attempt such an unusual endeavor, the design could be used for any green Martian horde foolhardy and ambitious enough to take their people into the skies.

TRANSPORT

Big, slow, and bulky, these fliers are unsuited for war or fast travel, but excellent for transporting large loads of people or supplies over the Barsoomian wastes. Vulnerable to attack but otherwise sturdy, they benefit from armed escorts or trained warriors traveling aboard.

CAPABLE OR LUMBERING TRANSPORT

CREW	ENGINES	CONTROLS
6	3	4

SYSTEMS	HULL	ARMOR
4	7	1

WEAPONS

None

- **Stress:** 16 (Lumbering), 11 (Capable)
- **Breaches:** 4 (Lumbering), 2 (Capable)

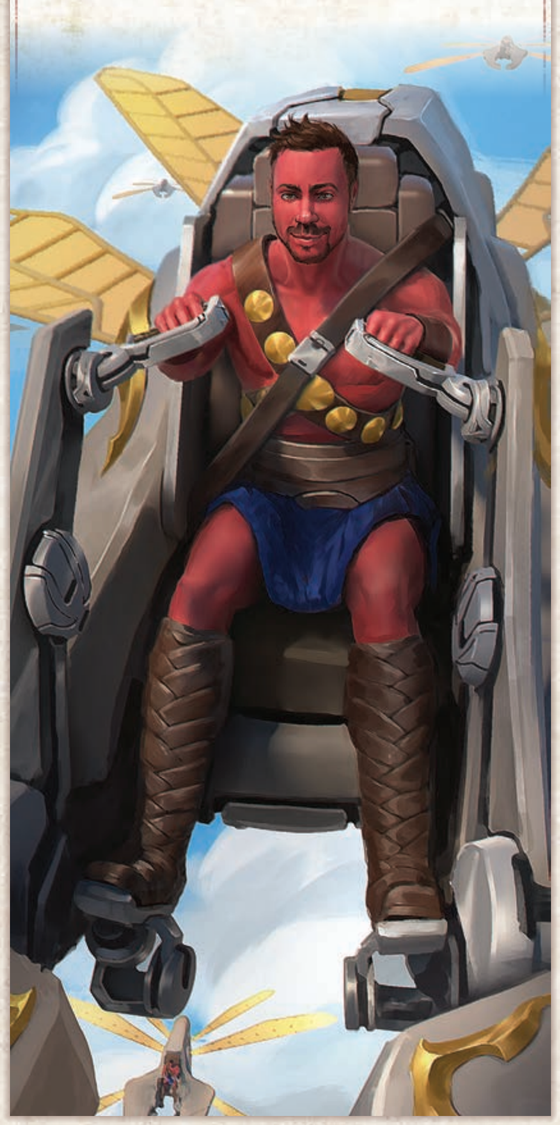
Transports are a catch-all category for any larger civilian craft designed to haul passengers or cargo over long distances. They are relatively uncommon compared to smaller fliers, but are valuable tools for nations such as Helium, who regularly need to transport goods and people to various cities and settlements. Transports are unarmed and rarely heavily armored.

Despite their large size and rugged construction, the transports' low attributes mean these vessels usually must be shielded from raiders and other hazards.

EQUILIBRIMOTORS

Equilibrimotors are personal flying devices that allow a single user to remain aloft.

Equilibrimotors allow a character to behave as a Graceful-sized flier for purposes of maneuverability and other advantages, but they don't have mechanics beyond this, instead using a character's attributes for aerial maneuvering and combat.



OPTIONAL RULE:
AIRBORNE CREATURES

Barsoom doesn't have any airborne beast able to menace more than the smaller airships. Even the fearsome malagor is more of a threat to individuals standing on an airship's deck than the ship itself. However, this doesn't mean such creatures could never exist. Forbidden science could grow and mutate the sith or malagor into ship-sized terrors. Or perhaps in some forgotten corner of Barsoom sleeps a prehistoric six-winged dragonlike beast. If such creatures existed they would be created as beasts, but given a size equivalent to an airship (Graceful, Capable, or Lumbering). This would make them hard to hurt by most characters, but able to harm an airship. It would also do terrible damage to smaller creatures, but may find it harder to attack such targets.

Example: *For an upcoming adventure, Sam is preparing a "Barsoomian Wyrm," a science-spawned monstrosity in the form of a giant flying ten-winged serpent the size of a large frigate. Sam's creation is meant to be a gigantic threat most effectively fought by engaging it with airships and airship-sized weapons. So, when creating his creature he stats the beast as normal, but then adds an ability that means it is considered to be of Capable size when attacking ships and trying to target smaller creatures.*

This option is only useful if the intent is to create creatures that will primarily fight airships. It is not necessary to add size to every beast or vehicle in the game; only those that are likely to come into conflict with a ship regularly. If someone manages to launch or drop a white ape on to a ship deck, the narrator can simply apply difficulties to reflect the unusual situation without the need for any additional rules.

SPACE SHIPS AND SPACE COMBAT

John Carter deals little with space travel. Most of the action takes place on Barsoom, and even Earthborn heroes like John Carter come to the red planet propelled by strange energies and unexplained phenomena instead of rockets. Trips to other worlds require specialized craft incredibly fast and difficult to harm by airship standards. Modifying an airship for space travel would be a massive undertaking and would require an almost total redesign. Even then, such craft would only have the power and speed to reach Barsoom's moon or some object in orbit.

Given the design requirements of a spacecraft, all but the largest and most heavily armed airships of Barsoom could do little to harm them. Even then, the craft could simply fly off at amazing speeds or fly through their targets, protected by hulls and systems designed to withstand the rigors of space travel. Should a conflict between a spacecraft and airship occur, narrators are encouraged to largely describe and narrate the encounter as desired, allowing roleplaying and the occasional appropriate test to determine the outcome.

But what about spaceship-to-spaceship conflict? Well, that's different.

While largely speculative in Burroughsian fiction, spaceship combat in *John Carter* plays out very similarly to airship combat, with a few key differences described in this section.

ONE: SPACE IS VAST

The basic range increments of Reach, Close, Away, Far, and Too Far remain in space combat, but they cover much larger distances. While an object or ship that is Too Far on Barsoom may be at the edge of the horizon or similarly distant, something Too Far in space is hundreds of thousands of miles distant. This won't affect ship-to-ship combat directly as the ranges are abstract, but narrators should keep it in mind when describing actions and battles.

Two: Space is Deadly

Humans cannot survive in space for more than a brief period. Unless some form of protection is developed and used, any character flung out into space is going to die quite quickly. Anyone other than a player hero or villain-class character is likely doomed, and even they will die unless found and rescued within a few turns.

For each round a character is exposed to vacuum they suffer 3 🎲 of Explosive damage. A character who is taken out by this damage is dead unless the narrator allows them to spend Luck (or Threat in the case of narrator characters) to survive in some miraculous way.

This also means that no spaceship possesses the open decks and railings so common on Barsoomian airships. Hulls would be completely enclosed with shatter-resistant ports and windows.

Three: Space is Alien

If Burroughs' works on Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and the Moon are any indicator, there are strange places and people beyond Barsoom. Some of this is discussed in Burroughs' work, but most of it will need to be invented by narrators willing to take their campaigns to the stars. This not only means alien races and strange worlds, but space storms, radiation clouds, weird massive lifeforms able to survive in deep space, and any manner of other phenomena. During space action and combat, these things may not be ever-present, but they should appear at times. Otherwise, space action and conflict are just airships with a different backdrop.

Mechanically, space battles are just airship conflicts and battles with a different backdrop. They feel different and narratively are very much not the same thing, but the base rules are kept the same for ease of use. Even the aforementioned weird space creatures and space storms are just dangers and enemies created the same way as a Barsoomian sandstorm or Zodangan frigate. This means it is largely up to the narrator to make space-based scenes and adventures feel special and distinct.

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS'

JOHN CARTER OF MARS

ATTRIBUTES

CREW

ENGINES

CONTROLS

SYSTEMS

HULL

ARMOUR

SHIP IDENTITY

NAME:

SIZE:

PURPOSE:

CONCEPT:

BREACHES

MAX

STRESS

MAX

NOTES:

TALENTS

FLAWS

WEAPON:

BASE DAMAGE	AMMO	NOTES

WEAPON:

BASE DAMAGE	AMMO	NOTES

WEAPON:

BASE DAMAGE	AMMO	NOTES

WEAPON:

BASE DAMAGE	AMMO	NOTES

ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEEDS

> *"My cousin has narrated the details of your wonderful achievement, which seems little short of miraculous, and if you can so well defend a cousin of the jeddak how much better could you defend the person of the jeddak himself. You are therefore appointed a padwar of The Guards and will be quartered in my palace hereafter."*
>
> – Than Kosis, *A Princess of Mars*

The renown system introduced in the John Carter of Mars core rulebook is designed to be simple and straightforward. Heroes gain renown which represents their growing fame and acclaim for their actions. This renown can be spent on accolades, social resources that advance the hero's place in the setting and campaign. The core book breaks accolades into two categories: allies and titles. By combining allies and titles, heroes can help shape kingdoms, gather great armies, and achieve other feats.

The rules presented in this chapter do not replace the renown system, but expand it. Titles and allies are still important parts of renown and character advancement, but now they are not the only ways to spend renown. By introducing two new types of accolades and a system for changing or evolving existing accolades, characters gain more precise ways to spend their renown and use it to shape Barsoom in specific ways. This also allows players to advance their characters more precisely.

This expanded system provides more options, but it requires more bookkeeping and decision-making on the part of narrators and players. There is nothing wrong with continuing to use the renown rules presented in the core book — they can serve players through multiple campaigns and countless adventures. These new rules exist only for those who desire to expand renown for their campaigns.

New Accolades

As mentioned previously, there are two new categories of accolades: achievements and deeds. The differences between the two and what effects they have in play are discussed in the new sections.

Achievements

Achievements are the term used for significant accomplishments that take time, prolonged effort, and have larger cultural or social ramifications beyond the character themselves. An achievement isn't something you do once, it's a fundamental change the heroes are responsible for. Achievements are used to change, advance, or destroy key elements of Barsoom, for good or ill. Achievements can free slaves, shatter faith, and remake institutions. Examples of achievements include:

- Unifying two or more great nations, creating a new nation.
- Shattering a larger empire into smaller states.
- Advancing a new belief.
- Destroying an old widely-held belief.
- Permanently changing the way a culture interacts with a group or culture.
- Freeing a group from servitude or slavery.
- Implementing a great cultural or scientific advancement across a whole nation or culture.
- Raising or destroying a mighty horde, army, or fleet.

Of course, not all achievements are so grand. Many smaller but still significant achievements are possible. Instead of unifying two nations, a hero might bring together two noble families. Instead of bringing enlightenment or freedom to a whole people, they might liberate a single city. These changes are still important, with lasting repercussions, and may one day lead to even greater achievements if the heroes persist in their efforts.

Purchasing Achievements

Achievements are priced according to their scope and impact. Scope represents how large an area or group the achievement affects, while impact is a measure of how great a change or advancement the achievement represents. Note that nothing that is considered an achievement is ever insignificant or irrelevant — even the least of these accolades casts a long shadow on the surface of Barsoom.

Technically speaking, heroes don't purchase achievements to make these events occur. They must accomplish achievements through their actions in play. You can't simply spend renown and free a people from slavery or create a great union of two cultures; you must undertake the actions required to make these things possible.

Depending on the scope of the achievement, it may take an entire campaign arc before heroes accomplish enough to warrant the creation of a new achievement. However, by spending renown on an achievement, they guarantee the changes will come to pass and their names will live on in association with their achievements.

SCOPE

- **Local**. Achievements affecting a city or a small, isolated culture cost 2 renown.
- **State.** Achievements affecting a moderately-sized nation or an important but restricted culture or group (the Okar, the Assassin's Guild, etc.) cost 3 renown.
- **Kingdom.** Achievements affecting large kingdoms or whole cultures cost 4 renown. Note that due to their ubiquity, red Martian culture cannot be chosen at this cost. Instead, multiple red kingdoms can be affected, but not all of them.
- **Worldwide.** Achievements affecting all of Barsoom cost 5 renown. Some small isolated pockets might avoid or resist these changes, but even they still recognize the impact of such great accomplishments.

IMPACT

- **Important.** A noteworthy and lasting but incremental change costs 2 renown.
- **Critical.** A moderate upheaval or reform to the status quo that changes life in one significant way or numerous smaller ways costs 3 renown.
- **Drastic.** A major upheaval or reform to the status quo that alters life in many significant ways costs 4 renown.
- **Overwhelming.** A total collapse or reform of the status quo costs 5 renown.

Scope and impact can go hand in hand, but not always. Destroying a false prophet beloved across the world would be high in both scope and impact. However, freeing all the slaves of a small nation and placing them in charge has great impact, but its scope is relatively small. Narrators should consider how high-scope-but-low-impact and low-scope-but-high-impact achievements may lead to additional developments in campaigns.

Example: *Faced with an invasion by a tyrannical jeddak with a vastly superior force, Jed Zala Zors finds she must raise an army to defend her small and ill-defended city state. In a desperate ploy, Zala organizes small but elite force of panthans and green Martian allies, forming a new military unit employing guerrilla tactics to harass and slow the enemy. After repelling the invasion, Zala decides she wishes to make her "1st Darseen Rangers" a new and active military force. Creating a permanent elite force allowing her city to hold out against a far superior force for an extended period and conduct other important covert actions is an achievement with critical impact and local scope. This costs 4 renown, 2 for its scope and 2 for its impact.*

ACHIEVEMENTS IN PLAY

The primary benefit of achievements is how they change the setting to suit the heroes' desires and goals. However, in cases where a particular achievement is particularly relevant to a test, narrators may reduce the difficulty of the test by 1 to reflect how the character's achievement has reduced obstacles and opened up new opportunities.

Example: *Later in the campaign, Zala is trying to scout the border for signs of raiders and infiltrators. She asks the narrator if her achievement of founding the 1st Darseen Rangers would help here. The narrator considers this and decides that after so much time spent around guerrillas, scouts, and ambushers, Zala is better at spotting signs of covert incursion than the average red Martian noblewoman, especially in her own territory. He lowers the difficulty of Zala's tests to scout the region by 1.*

DEEDS

Deeds are singular but significant events that become attached to the hero. A deed can occur with a single sword stroke or a well-timed appeal to the right person. Deeds represent great things that showcase a character's valor, skill, or other qualities at least as much as they change the setting significantly. The reputation built by deeds hangs on a hero like a cloak, accumulating to become a legend that even strangers use to judge and admire them. Examples of deeds include:

- Slaying a great leader, especially one who is a tyrant or a famous hero in their own right.
- Killing a great beast.
- Fixing a wondrous device whose operation benefits many, such as the Guardian or atmosphere plant.
- Earning a name among the green Martians by slaying a green warrior.
- Gaining an influential or legendary lover, spouse, retainer, or patron.
- Creating a device, strategy, or other work that has a single but significant use.

Deeds are often attached to or combined with other accolades to give a particular event or series of events significance in the character's life. For example, becoming the consort of a powerful jeddak who has promised only to love a great warrior would no doubt provide the character with a strong ally, but this may also constitute a deed as it impresses those who admire the character's ability to gain the love of such a demanding and powerful leader.

PURCHASING DEEDS

Deeds have a cost that corresponds to their scope and impact. Scope defines how widely known the deed is. A deed with lower scope is only known by some, while some deeds are known to nearly everyone on Barsoom. Impact is how impressive and difficult the deed was to perform. Nothing worth being considered a deed under this system is insignificant or unimpressive, but some deeds are more noteworthy than others.

Like achievements, deeds cannot simply be purchased with renown; they must be performed through play and then purchased. This is because the character is not exactly buying the deed they performed — the deed already happened. Instead, they are buying the boost in fame and reputation that the deed grants. This is what makes the deed valuable. In most cases it's obvious if a deed has been accomplished, but sometimes a narrator will need to rule if a lesser or alternate condition for purchasing a lower-cost deed or some other accolade is appropriate.

SCOPE

- **Local.** Deeds affecting a city or small, isolated culture or group cost 1 renown.
- **State.** Deeds affecting a moderately-sized nation or an important but restricted culture or group (the Okar, the Assassin's Guild, etc.) cost 2 renown.
- **Kingdom.** Deeds affecting large kingdoms or whole cultures cost 3 renown. Note that due to their ubiquity, red Martian culture cannot be chosen at this cost. Instead, multiple red kingdoms can be affected, but not all of them.
- **Worldwide.** Deeds affecting all of Barsoom cost 4 renown. Some small isolated pockets might be unaware of the details, but even they have some knowledge of the character's actions.

IMPACT

- Important impact is not used for deeds. Major characters in John Carter are expected to regularly perform important actions. Deeds are only awarded for those acts that go beyond their normal heroism.
- **Critical**. An impressive deed showing the hero is courageous or skilled costs no additional renown. This is the baseline for any action worthy of becoming a deed.
- **Drastic.** An exceptionally difficult and noteworthy deed that shows the hero is the elite of

their archetype or people costs 1 renown.

- **Overwhelming.** A nearly impossible deed showing the hero can accomplish tasks of legendary difficulty and importance costs 2 renown.

Scope and impact are usually closely related, with grand deeds of great difficulty becoming known far and wide. However, this is not always true. Killing a terrible beast known mostly to the denizens of a remote area might be very impressive, but it is not easily known and understood by most. Of course, if someone were to explain to an outsider how terrible the creature the hero defeated was, they would be very impressed. However, this is less common and takes additional action.

Example: *During an adventure to the Toonolian Marshes the green Martian hunter, Zemm Zurros, single-handedly slays a monstrous mutated banth that was terrorizing the local populace and had claimed the lives of numerous famous hunters and warriors from across Barsoom. Zemm's player decides to purchase the hunting and slaying of the creature as a deed. After discussing with the narrator, it is determined that destroying the beast is a deed recognized primarily in the Toonolian Marshes, having regional scope costing 2 renown to purchase. The beast was a serious threat to the region and considered all but impossible to track and defeat alone, with only the best of hunters having any chance of success. This makes his deed drastic as well, adding an additional renown point to bring its total cost to 3. Zemm's player spends 3 renown and records "Deed: Slayer of the Great Beast of Toonol" on his character sheet.*

Deeds in Play

When a deed is important to an action, it provides bonus Momentum that can be spent on the action. This functions essentially the same as a talent, though deeds may be used in addition to a talent if both apply to a test. Momentum from deeds cannot be saved; it must be used when relevant. This represents how great deeds make it easier to intimidate, convince, charm, and influence those who are moved by such accomplishments. The narrator is the final arbiter in deciding when a deed is useful in a test and how much bonus Momentum is provided. Normally 1 Momentum is a fair amount for an appropriate deed, but truly exceptional deeds or those which are strongly tied to the test may grant additional Momentum at the narrator's discretion.

Example: *Some time after defeating the Great Beast of Toonol, Zemm Zurros is seeking to get some vital information from an Okar noble who is also a famous huntsman. The narrator rules that Zemm's deed impresses the noble, giving Zemm 1 bonus Momentum for his test to convince the Okar to help him.*

Selecting Deeds

The need to earn a deed through play and purchase its larger effect with renown also means players may elect to let various potential deed-worthy actions pass without purchasing them as accolades. This doesn't mean their actions aren't heroic or impressive; it simply means that singular event won't become one of the "highlights" of their adventures beyond those who witnessed them or were directly impacted.

Example: *During a recent adventure, red Martian duelist Haran Phel defeats the Okar swordsman, Belen Yos, in a duel. Yos is a feared swordsman who recently killed a jed friendly to Phel and his fellow player heroes. Given Yos' skill and reputation, defeating him would be worthy of a deed. However, Phel's player isn't interested in revisiting his encounter with Yos, instead content to spend the renown earned from the adventure on a new ally, the slain jed's daughter who is grateful Phel avenged her father.*

Players also don't need to buy a deed as an accolade immediately. It is possible that some heroic or skillful act of a player hero doesn't come to prominence until later.

Optional Rule:
Exaggerated Deeds

If desired, a character can spend more renown on a deed than they earned performing it. This represents a task that was impressive but has also grown in the telling. A heroic duel against a skilled foe becomes a battle with a towering foe no one else could defeat.

Example: *Earthborn adventurer Maria Henderson's heroic actions recently resulted in the destruction of a band of pirates. The pirates were a threat to the whole region but it was only a single ship, meaning it was a deed of regional scope and critical impact, costing 2 points. However, Maria's player decides it would be interesting to exaggerate the deed. She spends an extra 2 renown, increasing the scope and impact each by one category. Her important but lesser deed has grown and been exaggerated so that now when the deed is recounted, it becomes a tale of how she single-handedly defeated a whole fleet of pirates that threatened whole nations.*

Doing this may create some new enemies or problems, especially if the hero's exaggerated fame comes at the expense of someone else. Also, doing this too often may earn a hero a reputation as a braggart.

Achievements vs. Deeds

Some players and narrators might have trouble understanding what constitutes an achievement versus what constitutes a deed. This is understandable, as they share many similarities. However, there are some key differences.

Achievements are more expensive, focused more on the setting, and come with an amount of security. When a hero purchases an achievement, they are changing the setting in a lasting way that is costly and somewhat eclipses them. By contrast, deeds usually come from a single significant act or sacrifice that the hero becomes known for, thus gaining them respect and influence even beyond their titles and allies. Even enemies often respect a great deed, as it demonstrates a character's skill, worthiness, and strength. This is less true of achievements, which are only appreciated by those who benefit from them.

Deeds come with no guarantees that a hero's actions might not be largely undone or reversed, nor do they guarantee that a threat extinguished won't rise again. A deposed tyrant may be replaced by a leader who's just as bad — or worse. A slain beast cannot devour and slay the populace, but other predators may move into the same region to fill this void. People will still appreciate the hero if these things come to pass — that is the value of the deed — but they may develop new problems of a similar nature.

Achievements, on the other hand, solve problems. They change, create, or eliminate parts of the setting to affect wider and lasting changes. While a deposed tyrant might rise, a kingdom broken into independent states or peacefully absorbed by its neighbor will not see the same threats rise again. A beast might return, but if the hero creates a cadre of wardens to protect the people from wild animals? They will always be safer from such whatever comes next. This doesn't mean everything is safe and wonderful forever, but it does offer security from the same threats and obstacles.

Purchasing Achievements and Deeds with Starting Renown

Technically, player heroes are allowed to purchase achievements and deeds with starting renown. However, they rarely ever should. These accolades are intended to influence the setting or enhance a character by representing what happens during play, not by buying already-accomplished great endeavors.

Despite this, occasionally a hero might purchase a minor deed or achievement to enable or explain some element of their beginnings as a player hero. A loyal guardsman might buy a low-cost deed that reflects stopping an assassination attempt on the jeddak. This explains why, of all the jeddak's guards, the player hero is the one selected for the sorts of special duties that often turn into campaign arcs and adventures. A raider or pirate might purchase a small but useful alliance between themselves and another group of pirates, providing additional support and setting the stage for an even more ambitious goal — the foundation of a great pirate nation.

What Makes Good Achievements and Deeds?

As a general guideline, if a task or endeavor is of the sort worthy of mention in a Barsoom novel, it is appropriate for purchase as an accolade. Certainly anything worthy of the focus of an entire chapter of one of the novels qualifies, such as repairing the atmosphere plant. Even efforts that at first seem minor or passive, such as John Carter's treating his mounts and pets with care and compassion, can provide excellent material for an accolade.

Achievements and deeds aren't just great ways to influence the setting — they show what the heroes themselves value. The best achievements and deeds don't just provide a great advantage, they also push events, cultures, and individuals towards the sort of Barsoom the heroes are working to create. If a hero hates slavery? Freeing the slaves in even a single city carries more weight than a development aiding a nation in ways the hero barely cares about.

Trading and Evolving Accolades

Renown never goes away. Even if a title is lost or an achievement is somehow undone, the hero retains the renown. This can be spent on new accolades based on the heroes' actions. However, there is another less violent and disruptive way to "cash in" accolades for other use. With narrator permission, player heroes can trade or evolve an existing accolade, replacing it with a related but different one.

These trades and evolutions are usually upgrades, with a lesser title becoming a greater one or a smaller achievement leading to a grander one over time. To evolve or replace an accolade, the player must pay the difference between their old accolade and the new version or replacement.

Example: *Earlier in his adventures, Earthborn soldier Kale Singh managed to save Thuvan Dinh, Jeddak of Ptarth, from a famed assassin. This act earned Singh a deed commemorating his valor — an act of regional scope and drastic impact costing 3 renown.*

After several more adventures in service to Ptarth, Dinh offers Singh a place in his personal guard, a position that carries the title of dwar. Singh's deed earned in Thuvan Dinh's service is the main reason he is offered this position and Singh's player wishes to evolve the deed into his new title. As the title of dwar costs 5 renown, Singh must pay 2 additional renown to make the change — the difference between his deed and the new accolade.

Once the new accolade is acquired, the effects of the former accolade are also somehow folded into or attached to it to reflect how it led to this new development. Thus, a great deed that eventually leads a player hero to be appointed odwar of a kingdom's armies will also lead to them developing a reputation based on that deed among the hero's soldiers, rivals, superiors, and enemies.

Example: Given a command in Thuvan Dinh's honor guard, Singh quickly develops a reputation built around his past deed earned by saving Dinh from assassination. His companions and subordinates in the guard quickly give Singh the nickname "Thuvan's Shield," a reference to his past defense of the jeddak. When using his title in situations where his deed would grant additional weight to his position and authority, the narrator decides it carries more weight than a normal rank of dwar.

However, it is also possible for a player hero to give up an accolade in exchange for a new one through their adventures. A character may totally surrender the benefits of an accolade in exchange for something new. This may happen organically during play or be part of some difficult bargain struck between the character and others in the setting.

***Example:** During a particularly harrowing adventure, Earthborn adventurer Maria Henderson and her ally, an Okar soldier and minor noblewoman named Baya Yin, managed to destroy a cult of apt-worshipping tyrants who operated from a hidden city of slaves in the north. Though the villains were defeated and the slaves freed, Baya was killed during the final battle.*

Unwilling to simply replace her dear friend with a similar ally and wishing to build a testimony to her sacrifice, Maria turns the city over to its former slaves, creating a new city-state in the north. The narrator agrees this would be a great achievement, one of kingdom scope and important impact — creating a new if initially weak state of former slaves in the north is a noteworthy event that will affect the Okar kingdom and northern regions. This means the new achievement costs 6 renown: 4 for scope and 2 for impact.

Baya cost 3 renown as an ally, so trading her in to create the new kingdom leaves 3 additional renown for Maria's player to spend. She does so out of the renown she gained from the adventure. The narrator decides the freed slaves name their new home for their liberators, and the city-state of Bayjan is born!

Narrators must approve upgrading, trading, and otherwise changing accolades. If a narrator feels a particular accolade cannot be merged or replaced with a new version, they should inform the player they will need to buy the new accolade on its own.

***Example:** Xaidor Malas, a Firstborn pirate and raider, has created a small "pirate nation" for herself out of various groups of allied raiders. Xaidor does not rule these pirates, but is revered as a founder and sits on the "council of captains" that sets most rules and policies.*

Later in the campaign, Malas falls in love with the ruler of a red Martian nation and the two are married. Now a princess of a red kingdom, she wishes to merge her pirate kingdom with her spouse's nation, trading the achievement of founding the nation and her title there for a title and achievement reflecting this change. However, after looking at the situation the narrator informs Xaidor's player she cannot do this. The pirate nation is too independent and wild to fold into the red kingdom, especially since Xaidor does not rule, she is simply one of its leaders. Instead, Xaidor must buy her new noble title with renown normally. However, she still retains her old title and her pirate kingdom remains, giving her two powerful groups to draw aid and resources from.

KEEPING TRACK OF CHANGES

Narrators who allow trading and evolving accolades must contend with a small but important amount of bookkeeping; they must track what renown was originally spent on and what new accolades were evolved or traded for by these expenditures. In most cases, narrators can leave much of this to players, asking them to note when (for example) a title is a result of a deed or when the heroic sacrifice of an ally gave rise to a great achievement. As the events surrounding accolades and renown are memorable, this is usually not only easy but enjoyable.

CHANGES AND DIFFICULTY

One major reason it is important to track such changes is because difficulties in John Carter are relative to characters. A task's difficulty is set based on how hard it is for the particular character to perform it, not a random or abstract character. Thus it is easier for a Prince of Koal to secure assistance from Koalians, or for the famed slayer of a deadly beast to track and understand a similar creature. Even if the renown and accompanying fame of an accolade changes or evolves through character advancement, these effects remain.

***Example:** During an adventure, Maria Henderson needs to convince an Okar noble to aid her. The noble is the sister of Baya Yin, Maria's old friend and ally who perished in the adventure contributing to a new achievement — in game terms Baya was an ally traded in for an achievement. Even though Maria no longer technically possesses the ally accolade for the departed Baya, the narrator decides the traded-in accolade reduces the difficulty of Maria's tests to persuade Baya's sister.*

GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEEDS

In many cases during John Carter adventures, multiple heroes work together to accomplish exceptional acts. While one character might grab the spotlight for a scene or even a whole session, the heroic endeavors are largely a group effort with everyone doing a roughly equal part. This is somewhat of a contrast to the Barsoom novels, which usually have a clear lead hero assisted by capable but clearly subordinate heroes.

This change between game and fiction creates a dilemma when it comes to action-based accolades such as deeds and achievements: who gets to claim the credit for the accolade and who pays for it. In truth there are three answers to this dilemma, all of them effective and with their own benefits and drawbacks.

OPTION A:
EVERYONE PAYS TOGETHER

In this option, every player hero who contributes to an achievement or deed contributes to its renown cost, usually chipping in 1 point each to buy a deed or achievement that is shared among the heroes. These accolades are understood by those who hear of them to be a group effort, with a single hero credited with being "one of the heroes who…" instead of "the hero who..." This spreads the cost around and makes deeds and achievements easier to acquire. However, it also dilutes the praise and attention for an individual hero. Some players may not be bothered by this change, but it will make individual heroes sometimes seem less exceptional than figures such as the famed John Carter, who tends to handle things more independently or with the help of a handful of allies who earn their own distinctive accolades through shared adventures.

Example: *During an adventure the heroes discover a process that can be used to convert certain common minerals into water. Used on a large scale over many years, this device could return water to the surface of Barsoom, changing its climate and possibly saving the dying world. The narrator rules that sharing and utilizing this discovery in this way would be an achievement of worldwide scope and critical impact costing 8 renown. The heroes all chip in renown from their adventure to begin this great project. In the future, while no one individual hero is called out as the mastermind of this great project, the group is collectively known by many as "the Waterbringers" and revered and respected for their efforts.*

This option allows a group of player heroes to change the setting quickly if they desire. This will likely make them feel powerful and important, but can result in a Barsoom that looks very different from that of the novels over the course of a longer campaign.

OPTION B:
EVERYONE PAYS THEIR OWN WAY

The second option is for every player hero to buy the deed or accolade separately. This is more expensive and makes the accolades less common, but it has two advantages. One, each hero gets the full credit and appreciation for their accolades — even if they worked as a group, everyone recognizes that without their particular contribution success would have eluded them all. Two, players can spend only on accolades that are personally important to them. If a player doesn't wish to be known largely for a particular deed or achievement, they can elect not to pay.

Example: *Instead of allowing the heroes to pool their resources, the narrator decides each must pay for the water restoration project individually. This is far more expensive, so the narrator makes sure that each player hero is lauded and recognized individually as a great part of this grand achievement.*

This option slows changing the setting and the character's place in it through deeds and achievements, meaning only those things most important to the players and their heroes get turned into deeds and achievements. This is more suitable for longer campaigns which aim to keep the world as it appears in the novels for much of its length.

OPTION C:
A BIT OF BOTH

In this option, a balance is struck between the two extremes. Players buy the accolades for their heroes individually, but they are given exceptional weight or distinction to reflect the large amount of collective renown spent. Further, certain tasks and elements of larger deeds and achievements may be divided up among the heroes to make them distinctive and more affordable. Using this option, players should select particular aspects of a deed or achievement they wish to have particular weight or focus. A group of heroes that disbands a secret order of assassins might define their shared deed based around the act to reflect their specific contributions, or each player who buys the same achievement might focus on a different part of the change, defining and more precisely controlling its development.

Example: *Using the third option, the narrator has players buy achievements for their great water-bringing project separately, but gives them greater fame and control over the project, as well as allowing it to be broken up into distinct deeds and achievements. Certain players decide to purchase related achievements, bringing water to select regions that matter deeply to their heroes or using the technology in other ways. This makes the project more costly, but definitely more important to both the heroes and Barsoom.*

This option is the most energy intensive for players and narrators alike, often requiring additional planning and discussion. However, it also allows greater control by the players and their heroes in shaping their reputations and the future of Barsoom while keeping changes moving slowly enough that they don't drastically change the setting every few adventures.

TRIBUTES

Accolades, especially titles, deeds, and achievements, often lead to a character's reputation and renown inspiring other characters in the setting to emulate and celebrate their actions. These do not require additional renown; they are a by-product of accolades and how others react to them. When heroes do exceptional things, people memorialize these actions through various tributes to their actions, character, and abilities. Some examples include:

- A hero gains a sobriquet or nickname relating to a great deed.
- Festivals are created in the hero's honor.
- When a hero returns to the site of a great deed or achievement, they find parades and other celebrations commemorating their visit.
- Characters known to be allies or companions to a beloved hero are asked about them by admirers, fans, and well-wishers.
- If unattached romantically, the hero finds they are suddenly the target of various suitors and matchmakers.
- A hero who saves a city or kingdom has a statue crafted in their honor or a song composed about their deeds.
- Scholars, merchants, and other characters want the heroes to endorse their own enterprises, hoping their backing will increase interest and support. This may lead to these characters naming a device, discovery, or other development after the hero.
- Fictionalized accounts of the heroes and their adventures are created by entertainers and storytellers across Barsoom. These can be dramatic, tragic, or even comically inaccurate at times.
- A hero who saves or frees a people sees children named after them or freed slaves or clanless warriors taking their name as a surname.
- In campaigns with large time jumps or that take place across several eras, the actions of heroic characters are studied by their successors for strategies and moral lessons.
- Institutions and secret societies style themselves after the hero and their adventurers. How accurate such groups are in discerning a hero's true motivations and beliefs is another question.
- A new airship is named for the hero or one of their famous acts of heroism.

Tributes are fun and memorable ways to remind players and characters alike that their actions matter to the world and the characters in it. They are also quite logical — on a dying and imperiled world such as Barsoom people need hope. Heroes and their efforts represent this.

Often tributes are played for laughs or create interesting complications, but they should not make a mockery of a hero. Narrators should remember that such things are tied to the character's hard-earned renown and should be generally appreciated and respected, not ridiculed.

Example: *After implementing their grand project to return water to the surface of Barsoom, the heroes regularly encounter various tributes to them throughout the campaign. During one adventure, they meet a child named after one of the heroes. During another, they find somewhat inaccurate but still heroic depictions of their adventures on a mural painted in a city plaza. These tributes are not ever-present, but they surface often enough to remind the heroes what a great thing they have done for the world.*

Tributes don't come with direct mechanical benefits by default, but in many cases they can make tests easier or may provide bonus Momentum or lower difficulties. Trying to impress someone during a festival held in your honor is easier. Of course, excessive fame has its own challenges, and heroes may find themselves the subject of unwanted attention.

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTERS WITH ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEEDS

To see how achievements and deeds work with a characters background and acts, we have provided the player hero Fayor Mir on the following pages.

This character can also be used as higher level player hero, or an interesting supporting character in your campaigns.

FAYOR MIR

TELEPATHIC BEASTMASTER

“ “The hunt is the one true thrill of life, along with the friendship of a loyal beast.”

ATTRIBUTES

DARING	CUNNING	EMPATHY
7	7	6

MIGHT	PASSION	REASON
8	4	4

STRESS TRACKERS

CONFUSION	FEAR	INJURY
6	7	8

TALENTS

LEAPS AND BOUNDS (GRADE 2)

Your Earthborn muscles allow you to leap great distances and perform great feats of strength while on Barsoom.

- **Circumstance:** When moving on Barsoom and planets with similar gravity.
- **Effect:** You may close one range category automatically, ignoring any obstacles or intervening terrain as long as you have clearance and space to leap between your starting point and destination. You may spend 1 Momentum to move an additional range category.

CALL OF THE WILD (GRADE 1)

Lesser beasts heed your call. They bend to your will and follow your commands.

- **Circumstance:** Commanding or controlling any animal.
- **Effect:** You may automatically control the actions of 1 minion beast for the rest of the scene. You may control additional minion-class beasts for 1 Momentum per additional beast. If attempting to use this talent on an exceptionally loyal beast bonded to another, you may only control the beast for one turn.

JUST A SCRATCH (GRADE 2)

Either due to high pain tolerance or years of experience with injury, you can shrug off the effects of most minor flesh wounds and shallow cuts.

- **Circumstance:** When suffering a Wounds affliction.
- **Effect:** You can ignore the effects of 1 Wounds affliction for the scene. It doesn’t go away, but you suffer no negative effects. This affliction does not count against a character’s total afflictions for blacking out.

HUNTER’S PACK (GRADE 3)

You possess the ability to control and command banths. These terrifying creatures will heed your call and hunt beside you as if you were part of their pack.

- **Circumstance:** When calling banths to hunt at your side, verbally or telepathically.
- **Effect:** Banths do not attack you unless they are first attacked, starving or otherwise aggravated. You may attempt to call them to your aid when hunting. This is a (D3) test and if successful you may issue the banth a command, 1 point of Momentum may be spent to make another command. The banth will follow your commands to the best of its ability, only leaving once the hunt is finished, it is killed, or you cause it harm. The maximum number of banths you can command is equal to the half of the lowest attribute of Cunning or Empathy.

SKILLED HEALER (GRADE 1)

You learned the ways of healing from your mother, allowing you to help both Martian and beast in need.

- **Circumstance:** When healing your own or other’s afflictions.
- **Effect:** Once per scene you may spend a Conflict action to heal the affliction of another; provided you are close enough to treat their wounds, no test is needed.

FLAWS

HUNTER’S FURY

When faced with those who would hunt dishonorably or torture an animal, either while hunting it or holding it captive, every turn you spend not acting to stop it causes you to lose 2 Momentum.

CORE EQUIPMENT

- Spear tipped with sith venom
- Fine Kaolian short sword

RENOWN AND ACCOLADES

RENOWN

- Shadow Master of the Hunt (5 Renown)
- Slayer of Great Beasts (Deed, 5 Renown. Kingdom scope, Overwhelming impact)
- Safer and Prepared Nations (Achievement, 6 Renown. Kingdom scope, Important impact)

BACKGROUND

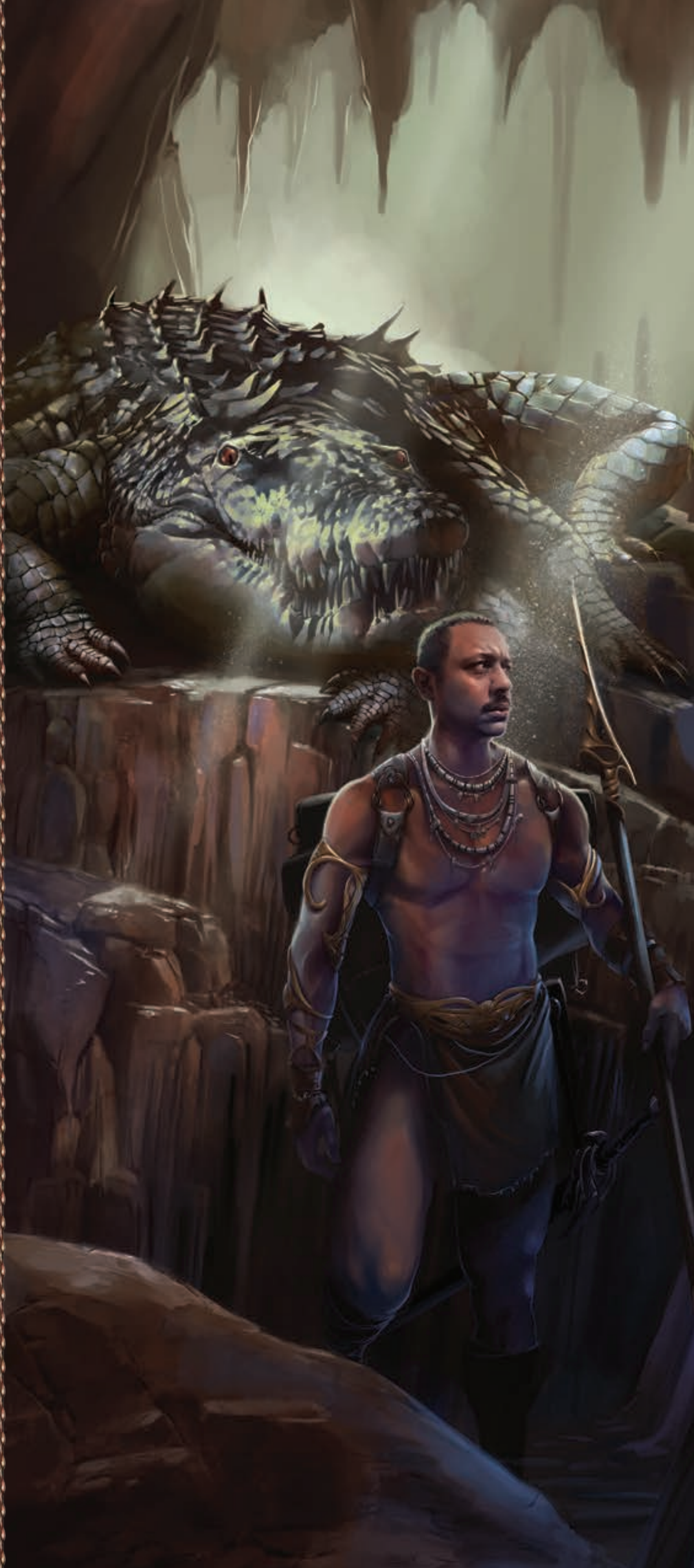
There are many rumors of a dark-skinned beastmaster by the name of Fayor Mir, who travels Barsoom's wilds. Those who have seen him, or received his help, describe a black-haired man with bronze eyes, who brings with him great melancholies and great mirth, and has the wild spirit of freedom about him. Some whisper that he has been seen hunting with a pack of banths, while others say he must be a ghost, as no normal man can hunt so silently.

Fayor Mir is the offspring of Mira, a red Martian woman from Kaol, and Fayomi, an Earthborn man, Fayor's father was a member of a secret underground resistance, years prior to Harriet Tubman's, before getting lost in a railway tunnel and awakening on Barsoom, only to be captured by First Born raiders. While being held captive, Fayomi met and fell in love with a red Martian woman named Mira. She possessed the strange ability to soothe and calm the ferocious creatures known as banths, and the First Born took great pleasure in watching these taming displays. When Mira and Fayomi produced an egg, they knew they had to escape for the sake of their child. Sadly, Fayomi was killed while facilitating this escape, but Mira escaped, clutching the egg that would grow to be one of Barsoom's greatest beastmasters.

Having grown up in Barsoom's wilds, and taught the ways of the spear and sword by his mother, Fayor Mir is an expert hunter who has traversed Barsoom far and wide. Armed with a spear tipped with sith venon and his father's sword from the First Born arena, he is always prepared for the hunt to begin. This legendary beastermaster has hunted many great and terrible beasts thanks to his father's Earthborn strength, but having also inherited his mother's unique telepathic abilities, he has befriended some too.

The most notable and difficult of Fayor's hunts was that of a pack of Martian spiders. After escaping the Valley Hohr, these terrible oversized insects began to make a small red Martian city their home. The creatures slowly took over, breeding at an alarming rate, while the city struggled to keep the arachnids, now hunting in packs, at bay. Fayor Mir, following rumors of the insect's new home, arrived at the city to find it almost completely covered in the spiders' thing gossamer threads, and its inhabitants tanged within them. Calling upon his loyal pride of banths, Fayor Mir slipped into the city and slew each one of the giant spiders. To this day no one knows how he survived the swarms and their terrible shrieking, , how he avoided being tangled in their webs, or how he did it all without being seen. The jed of the city named Fayor Shadow Master of the Hunt, an honorary title for the man who saved his people.

Several other small cities have also bestowed the title of Shadow Master of the Hunt upon Fayor's shoulders, assigning him to the honorary position named for his title, after he came to their aid in times of trouble. Be it a terrible beast stalking the citizens, famine due to lack of successful hunts, or training Barsoom's sons and daughters in the way of the beastmaster, Fayor Mir lends his skill. Thanks to him, more than one city is safer and prepared for terrible beasts, while others now hunt better than ever before. Once his duty has been done, however, he disappears again into Barsoom's wilds, like an incorporeal shadow of the Martian night, as stealthy as the apex predators with whom he hunts.



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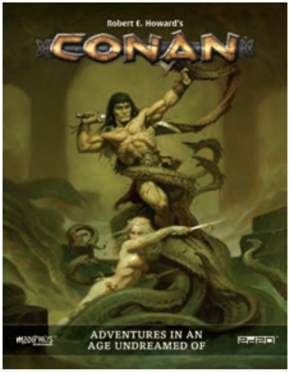
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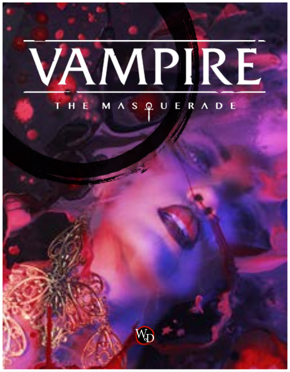
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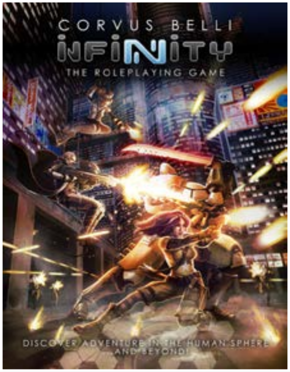
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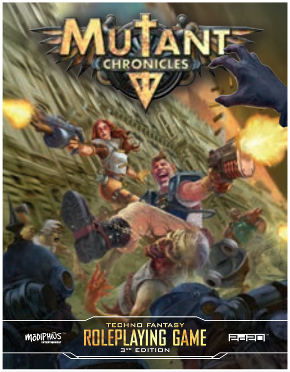
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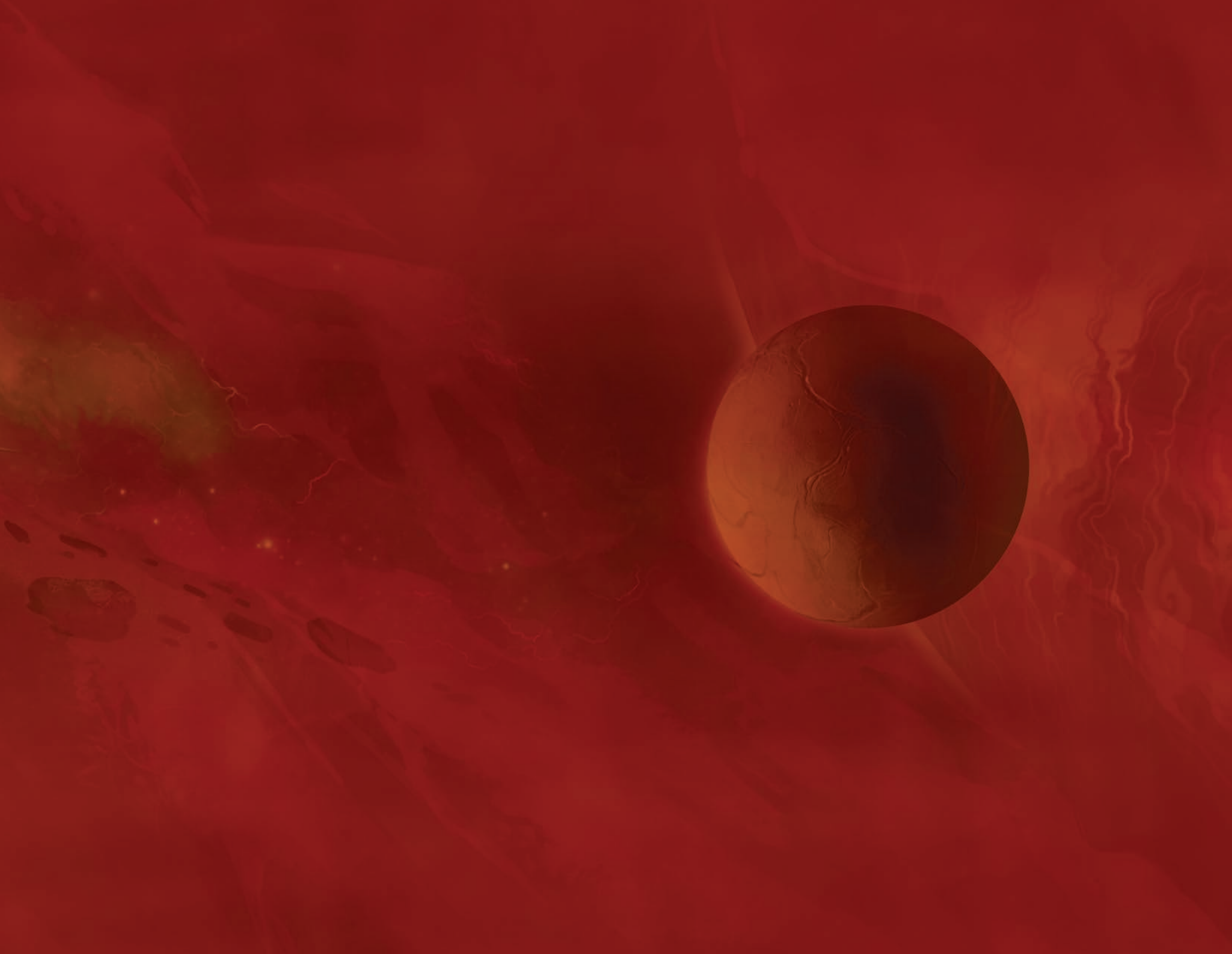

ADVENTURES ON BARSOOM IN THE DOTAR SOJAT ERA

> *I opened my eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness. I was not asleep, no need for pinching here; my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact; neither did I.*

Edgar Rice Burroughs' ***John Carter of Mars: Dotar Sojat Era Supplemental Rulebook*** provides you with an in depth look at the Dotar Sojat era of play for the ***John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom*** roleplaying game.

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- New strange technology, powers for your players to acquire and mysterious places of the Dotar Sojat era to explore, all packed with plot seeds to inspire narrators.
- Expanded rules for airships and using them in battle, rules for designing and building your own vessel, and a selection of pre-made ships for player and narrator convenience.

This supplement requires the ***John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom*** core rulebook.

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